

A  
**Christian Library:**

CONSISTING OF

EXTRACTS from and ABRIDGMENTS of

THE

CHOICEST PIECES

OF

**Practical Divinity,**

Which have been publish'd in the

**ENGLISH TONGUE.**

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IN FIFTY VOLUMES.

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By **JOHN WESLEY, M. A.**

Late FELLOW of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

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**VOL. XXXIV.**

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**BRISTOL:**

Printed by **E. FARLEY.**

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**MDCCLIV.**



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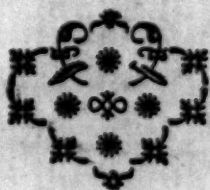
From Dr. GOODMAN'S

W I N T E R E V E N I N G  
C O N F E R E N C E .

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In Three P A R T S .

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A 2

*The*

EXTRACT

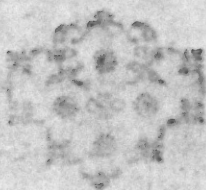
From Dr. Goeman's

WINTER EVENING

CONFINCE



In Three Parts



The Character of the Persons in  
the following Conferences.


**S**EBASTIAN, a learned and pious Gentleman, who takes all Advantages of engaging those he converses with, in Sobriety, and a Sense of Religion.

◀ **PHILANDER**, a genteel and ingenious Person, but too much addicted to the Lightnesses of the Age, 'till reclaimed by the Conversation of *Sebastian*.

**BIOPHILUS**, a sceptical Person, who had no settled Belief of any Thing; but especially was averse to the great Doctrines of Christianity, 'till at length awakened by the discreet Reasoning of *Sebastian*, and the affectionate Discourses of *Philander*, he begins to deliberate of what before he despised.

The





## The Argument of the First Conference.


Sebastian *visiting his Neighbour Philander,* after a little Time spent in civil Salutation, is quickly pressed by him to the too usual Entertainment of liberal Drinking; which Sebastian at first modestly declines; but afterwards more directly shews the Folly and Unmanliness of it. He is then invited to Gaming; which he also excusing himself from, and giving his Reasons against, Philander complains of the Difficulty of spending Time without such Diversions. Whereupon Sebastian represents to him sundry Entertainments of Time, both more delightful, and more profitable, amongst which, that of friendly and ingenious Discourse: And from thence they are led on to debate about Religious Conference; the Usefulness, Easiness, Prudence and Gentility of which are largely demonstrated: Of which Philander being convinced, enquires the Way of entring into it, of continuing and managing of it. In which being instructed by Sebastian, he resolves to put it in Practice.



## The Argument of the Second Conference.

*In the former Conference Sebastian having convinced Philander of the great Importance of Religion, and the Wisdom of making it as well the Subject of social Communication, as of retired Meditations; accordingly, they two meet on purpose, this second Time, to confer about it. But Biophilus a sceptical Person, being in their Company, at first diverts them from their Design, by other Discourse; 'till after a while, under the Disguise of News, he is brought into this Subject before he was aware: And then he puts them upon the Proof of those Principles, which they would have supposed. Upon this Occasion the Foundations of Religion are searched into; and particularly, that great Point concerning a Judgment to come: Which being done, and Biophilus thereby rendered somewhat more serious, they pursue their first Intention, and discourse warmly and sensibly of another World, and of the necessary Preparations for it.*

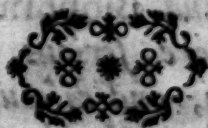
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## The Argument of the Third Conference.

Sebastian and Philander, meeting together at the House of Biophilus, (in pursuance of a former Resolution taken between them) represent to him the whole Scheme of Religion and now render it as rational in itself, as before they had shewed it to be prudent and important. Then they entertain one another with pious and useful Discourses, partly of the Necessity of Constancy in Religion, and the Considerations that will maintain it, partly of the Means of obtaining and preserving an even Temper of spiritual Comfort through the whole Course of a Christian Life.

6 JY 64



A WIN-





**WINTER EVENING**  
**CONFERENCE,**  
**AT**  
**Philander's House.**

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**PART I.**

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*Sebastian.*

**Good Evening to you, Philander. I**  
**am glad to find you in Health, and I**  
**hope all your Family is so too.**

*Philander.* **I HUMBLY thank you,**  
**Sir, we are all well, (God be praised) and the bet-**  
**ter to see you here; for I hope you come with In-**  
**tentions**



tentions to give us your good Company this long Evening.

*Sebast.* If that will do you any Pleasure, I am at your Service. For to deal plainly, I came with the Resolution to spend an Hour or two with you; provided it be not unseasonable for your Occasions, nor intrench upon any Business of your Family.

*Phil.* BUSINESS, Sir! At this Time of the Year we are even weary with Rest, and tired with having nothing to do.

*Sebast.* It is a Time of Leisure I confess; the Earth rests, and so do we; yet, I thank GOD, my Time never lies upon my Hands, for I can always find something or other to employ myself in. When the Fields lie dead, and admit of no Husbandry, I then can cultivate the little Garden of my own Soul; and when there is no Recreation Abroad, I have a Company of honest old Fellows in Leathern Coats, which find me Divertisement at Home.

*Phil.* I KNOW the Company you mean, though I confess I have not much Acquaintance with them; but do you not find it a melancholy Thing to converse with the Dead?

*Sebast.* WHY should you say they are dead? No, they are immortal, they cannot die, they are all Soul, Reason without Passion, and Eloquence without Noise or Clamour. Indeed, they do not eat and drink, by which only Argument some Men prove themselves to be alive, as *Cyrus* proved the Divinity of his God *Bel*. But these are kept without Cost, and yet retain the same Countenance, and are always chearful and diverting. Besides, they have this peculiar Quality, that a Man may have their

their Company, or lay them aside at Pleasure, without Offence. Notwithstanding, I must needs acknowledge, I prefer the Company of a good Neighbour before them; and particularly am well satisfied, that I cannot spend this Evening better than in your Conversation.

*Phil.* You doubly oblige me, *Sebastian*, first in your great Condescension to make me this kind Visit, and then in forsaking so good Company for mine.

*Sebast.* YOUR great Courtesy, *Philander*, interprets that to be an Obligation upon yourself, which is but Self-love in me: For truly I am sensible that so great a Part of the Comfort of Life depends upon a Man's good Correspondence with those that are near about him, that I think I cannot love myself, unless I love my Neighbour also. And now, Sir, if you please, let us upon this Occasion improve our Neighbourhood to a more intimate Friendship; so that you and I, who have hitherto lived peaceably and inoffensively by each other, may henceforth become useful to one another.

*Phil.* You talk of Self-Love; but I shall be so far from it, that I must hate myself, and that deservedly too, if I lay not hold of so advantageous a Proposal.

*Sebast.* No Compliments, I beseech you; that will spoil our Design, and continue us Strangers to each other.

*Phil.* If I were used to compliment, yet I should be ashamed to make so superficial a Return to an Overture of so much Kindness and Reality; but I am

am plain and hearty, and I heartily embrace both yourself and your Motion.

COME, Sir, what will you drink?

*Sebast.* ALL in good Time, Sir.

*Phil.* NAY, never in better Time; now is the Season of Drinking; we must imitate the Plants, and now suck in Sap to serve us all the Year after: If you will flourish in the Spring, you must take in good Juices in the Winter.

*Sebast.* YOU seem, *Philander*, to dream of a dry Summer, however I will pledge you, for I am sure the Winter is cold.

*Phil.* WELL, Sir, here is what will abate the Edge of the Weather, be it as sharp as it can. This Drink will make the Evenings warm, and the Nights short, in Spite of the Season. But then you must take the full Dose. Come, fear it not, this will breed good Blood, cure Melancholy, and is the only Cement of good Neighbourhood.

*Sebast.* WHY then I hope our Friendship will be lasting, for the Cement (as you call it) is strong.

*Phil.* YOU are pleasant, *Sebastian*: But now you and I are together, and under the Rose too, (as they say) why should not we drink somewhat briskly? We shall know one another, and love one another the better ever after. For, let me tell you, this will open our Hearts, and turn our very Insides outward.

*Sebast.* THAT Trick, *Philander*, I confess I have seen play'd, but I thought it a very unseemly one.

*Phil.*



*Phil.* I DOUBT you mistake me; I mean only, that a liberal Glass will take off all Reservedness.

*Sebast.* I UNDERSTAND you; but with your Pardon, I must needs tell you, that I have never been able to observe the Glass you speak of to be so exact a Mirrour of Minds, but as often to disfigure and disguise Men, as truly to represent them. Have you not found some Men, who upon an Infusion in strong Liquor, have seemed for the present to be totally dissolved into Kindness and good Nature; and yet as soon as ever the Drink is squeezed out of these Sponges, they become again as dry, as hard, and as rough as a Pumice. Others you shall observe to hector in their Drink, as if they were of the most redoubted Courage, whose Spirits nevertheless evaporating with their Wine, they prove as tame errand Cowards as any in Nature. Perhaps also you may have taken Notice of a Kind of Soakers, who commonly relent when they are well moistened, as if they shrunk in the Wetting; and will at such Times seem to be very religious; and yet for all they continue as sottish as ever, as impenitent as a weeping Wall. Contrariwise, there are some Men, who in the general Habit of their Lives, appear to be very discreet and ingenious Persons; yet, if contrary to their Custom, they have the Misfortune to be surprized with Drink, they become as dull as Dormice, as flat and insipid as Pumpions.

I CANNOT think therefore that this Drink-Ordeal is so infallible a Test of Mens Tempers as you imagine; or if it were, yet there is no Need of it between you and me: We can candidly and sincerely lay open our Bosoms to each other, without having a Confession of our Sentiments forced from us, by this new-fashioned Dutch Torture.



*Phil.* I AM not for scandalous and debauched Drinking, but in a civil Way between Friends, to make our Spirits light, and our Hearts chearful.

*Sebast.* AND I am not of that morose Humour, to condemn all Chearfulness; neither do I take upon me to prescribe to every Man his just Dose, or think a Man must divide by an Hair, or be intemperate. Yet, on the other Side, I am persuaded that a Man may love his House, though he doth not ride upon the Ridge of it; and can by no Means be of their Opinion, who fancy, there is no Freedom but in a Debauch, no Sincerity without a Surfeit, or no Chearfulness whilst Men are in their right Wits. And I look upon the very Conceit of this as reproachful both to GOD and Man; but the Practice of it, I am sure, is the Bane of all manly Conversation.

*Phil.* I HAVE known some Men oppose one Vice with another as bad, or worse; and who, whilst they railed at Drinking, have only made Apologies for Ill-Nature: But you, *Sebastian*, that have so much Good-Nature yourself, will, I presume, make some Allowances to Complaisance in others.

*Sebast.* FAR be it from me to undervalue Good-Nature, which I have in so great Esteem, that I scarcely think any Thing is good without it: It is the very Air of a good Mind, the Sign of a large and generous Soul, and the peculiar Soil on which Virtue prospers. And as for that genuine Fruit of it, Complaisance, I take it (if it be rightly understood) to be that which above all Things renders a Man both amiable and useful in the World: But the Mischief is, (as it generally happens to all excellent Things) there is a Counterfeit, which (assuming the Name) passes current for it in the World,

World, by which Men become impotent, and incapable of withstanding any Importunities, be they never so unreasonable; or resisting any Temptations, be they never so dangerous; but as if they were crippled in their Powers, or crazed in their Minds, are wholly governed by Example, and sneakingly conform themselves to other Mens Humours and Vices; and, in a Word, become every Man's Fool that hath the Confidence to impose upon them. Now this is so far from that lovely masculine Temper of true Complaisance, that it is indeed no better than a childish Bashfulness, a silly Softness of Mind, which makes a Man first the Slave and Property, and then the Scorn of his Company. Wherefore it is the Part of a good-natured Man, neither so rigidly to insist upon the Punctilio's of his Liberty or Property, as to refuse a Glass recommended to him by Civility; nor yet, on the other Side, to be either hector'd or wheedled out of his Christian Name (as we say) and sheepishly submit himself to be taxed in his Drink, or other indifferent Things, at other Mens Pleasure. And if he shall fall into the Company of those who shall assume to themselves such an arbitrary Power, as to assess him at their own Rate, and prescribe their Measures to him, I do not doubt but that with a *Salvo* both to Good-Nature and Civility, he may and ought so far to assert his own Dominion over himself, as with a generous Disdain to reject the Imposition, and look upon the Imposers as equally tyrannical and impertinent with those who would prescribe to me to eat their Proportions of Meat, or to wear my Cloaths just of their Size.

*Phil.* O SIR, your Discourse is brave, and wise; but I doubt it is not practicable: You cannot certainly but be sensible how difficult a Thing it is for Modesty and Good-Nature to oppose the prevailing

Humour of the Age, which, in plain Truth is such, that now-a-days a Man looks very oddly that keeps any strict Measures of Drinking.

*Sebast.* I AM afraid it is too true which you say; I confess to you, it is a Matter of Regret and Disdain to me to observe Skill in good Liquors ambitiously pretended to, as if they were a considerable Point of Knowledge; and good Drinking looked upon as so important an Affair, that that Time seems to be lost, in which the Glass goes not round, and the Cup and Bottle seem to be the Hour-glass or the only Measure of Time. And this I the more wonder at, because the Air, the Climate, and Constitutions of Mens Bodies are not changed, and the Laws of Temperance are the same they were wont to be: I would therefore fain know, what hath brought this tipling Humour into Fashion.

*Phil.* IT is the Observation of wise Men, that generally the Customs of People were taken up at first, upon the Account of some natural Necessity or Defect (as we see generally Art supplies and perfects Nature.) Now you know we live in a cold Climate, and consequently must needs have dull phlegmatick Bodies, the Influence of which upon our Minds is easily discernible; so that it should seem, Drinking is more necessary to us, than to most other People, if it were but to make us sprightly and conversable.

*Sebast.* Now, *Philander*, you have mended the Matter finely; to avoid my Censure of the good Fellows, you have censured the whole Nation as a Generation of dull Sots: And represented your Countrymen as a Sort of People newly fashioned out of Clay, that have no Soul at all, 'till it is that extracted out of the Spirit of Wine. But in the mean



mean Time, I wonder what became of all our sober Ancestors, and particularly of the dry Race of Queen *Elizabeth*-men (as they are called). I cannot find but they had as much Soul and Spirit as the present Generation (however they came by it) tho' they never made Alembicks of themselves. But why do you smile, *Philander*?

*Phil.* EVEN at myself: In plain Truth, I am such a Spot of Earth, as will bear nothing unless it be well watered; and to countenance myself in this Condition, though I cannot pretend to Learning, yet I remember I have heard, that the gravest Philosophers did use to water their Plants (as we say) and sometimes philosophized over a Glass of Wine.

*Sebast.* AND why not over a Glass of Wine, as well as by a Fire-side? Provided a Man take Care, that as by the one he does not burn his Shins, so by the other he doth not over-heat his Head; or to follow your Metaphor, provided a Man only water the Soil, and do not drown it.

*Phil.* BUT I have heard some say, they have always found their Reason to be strongest, when their Spirits were most exalted.

*Sebast.* BUT sure they did not mean that their Reason was strongest, when the Wine was too strong for them? If they did, then either their Reason was very small at the best, and nothing so strong as their Drink, or else we are quite mistaken in the Names of Things; and so in plain *English*, Drunkenness is Sobriety, and Sobriety Drunkenness: For who can imagine, that that which clouds the Head, should enlighten the Mind; and that which wildly agitates the Spirits, should strengthen the Understanding; or that a coherent Thread of Dis-



course, should be spun by a shattered vertiginous Brain?

BUT if I should grant, that Men well whetted with Wine (as they love to speak) are very sharp and piquant, very jocose and ready at a Repartee; yet besides that, this Edge is so thin, and Razor-like, that it will serve to no manly Purposes; yet it is also very dangerous, since at that Time a wise Man hath it not in Keeping.

*Phil.* WELL but one Thing I am sure you will grant, *viz.* that Wine suppresses Cares and Melancholy; and this, I suppose, sufficiently commends the liberal Use of it.

*Sebast.* THAT which you now say is undeniably true; but yet I know not how it comes to pass, that this Remedy is seldome made Use of by those to whom it was peculiarly prescribed; I mean, the Melancholy and Dejected have ordinarily the least Share of it: It is commonly taken by the Prosperous, the Sanguine, and Debonair, and such as have least Need of it; and these frequently have it in such large Proportions, that it makes them not only forget their Sorrows, (if they had any) but themselves and their Business too. So that, upon the whole Matter, I see no tolerable Account can be given of the Way of Drinking now in Fashion; for it appears to be taken up upon no Necessity; it is recommended by no real Advantage either to the Body or Mind, and therefore must owe its Rise to no better Causes than Dulness or Idleness, a silly Obsequiousness to other Mens Humours, or Epicurism and Wantonness of our own Inclinations. And for the Habit of it, it is no better than a lewd Artifice to avoid Thinking; a Way for a Man to get shut of himself, and of all sober Considerations.

SHALL

SHALL I need after all this, to represent the Sin committed against GOD Almighty, by this vain Custom, in the Breach of his Laws, deforming his Image, and quenching his Spirit; or the Injury it doth to human Society, in the riotous and profuse Expence of so comfortable a Cordial; or shall I but reckon up the Mischiefs a Man hereby incurs to his own Person, the Danger of his Health, the Damage to his Fortune, the ———

*Phil.* O, NO more, no more, good *Sebastian*: You have silenced, you have vanquished me: I am not able to resist the Evidence of Truth: You have quite marr'd a good Fellow, and spoiled my Drinking.

BUT how then shall I treat you? Come you are for serious Things, what say you to a Game at Tables? Methinks that is both a grave and a pleasant Entertainment of the Time.

*Sebast.* TRULY, Sir, I am so unskilful at that and most other Games, that I should rather give you Trouble than Diversion at it. But what need you be solicitous for my Entertainment; it is your Company only which I desire? And methinks it looks as if Friends were weary one of the other when they fall to Gaming.

*Phil.* BUT I should think a Man of your Temper might have a Fancy for this Game, because it seems to be a pretty Emblem of the World.

*Sebast.* How, I pray you, Sir?

*Phil.* WHY, in the first Place, the casual Agitation of the Dice in the Box, which unaccountably produceth such or such a Lot, seems to me to represent

present the Disposal of that invisible Hand which orders the Fortunes of Men. And then the dextrous Management of that Lot or Cast resembles the Use and Efficacy of Prudence and Industry in the Conduct of a Man's own Fortunes.

*Sebast.* I PERCEIVE, *Philander*, that you play like a Philosopher, as well as a Gamester; but, in my Opinion, you have forgotten the main Resemblance of all; which is, that the Clatter and Noise in tossing and tumbling the Dice and Table-men up and down, backward and forward, lively describes the Hurry and Tumult of this World, where one Man goes up, and another tumbles down; one is dignified and preferred, another is degraded; that Man reigns and triumphs, this Man frets and vexes; the one laughs, the other repines; and all the rest tug and scuffle to make their Advantage of one another. Let this, if you please, be added to the Moral of your Game. But when all is done, I must tell you, for my Part, I am not so much taken with the Original, as to be fond of the Type or Effigies: I mean, I am not so in Love with the World, as to take any great Delight in seeing it brought upon the Stage, and acted over again: But had much rather retreat from it, when I can, and give myself the Contentment of Repose, and quiet Thoughts.

*Phil.* HOWEVER, I hope you are not offended at my Mention of that Game. Do you think it unlawful to use any Diversion?

*Sebast.* No, dear *Philander*; I am sensible that whilst Men dwell in Bodies, it is fit they not only keep them up in necessary Reparation by Meat and Drink, but also make them lightsome and chearful, otherwise the Mind will have but an uncomfortable Tenancy. I would therefore as soon universally forbid



forbid all Physick, as all Kinds of Exercise and Diversion; and indeed rather of the two, for I think the latter may in a great measure save the Trouble of the former, but that will do little or no Good without this.

BUT to deal freely with you: I cannot very much commend these Kind of Sports; for indeed I scarce think them Sports, they are rather a counterfeit Kind of Business, and weary one's Head as much as real Study and Business of Importance. So that in the Use of them a Man only puts a Cheat upon himself, and tickles himself to Death; for by applying himself for Delight to these busy and thoughtful Games, he becomes like a Candle lighted at both Ends, and must needs be quickly wasted away between Jest and Earnest, when both his Cares and his Delight prey upon him.

BESIDES, I observe, that Diversions of this nature having so much of Chance and Surprize in them, generally too much raise the Passions of Men, which it were fitter by all Arts and Endeavours to charm down and suppress. For, to say nothing of the usual Accidents of common Gaming-Houses, which (as I have heard from those that knew too well) are the most lively Pictures of Hell upon Earth; I have seen sad Examples of Extravagance in the more modest and private, but over-eager Pursuits of these Recreations: Inso-much that sometimes a well-temper'd Person hath quite lost all Command of himself at them: So that you might see his Eyes fiery, his Colour inflamed, his Hands tremble, his Breath to be short, his Accents of Speech fierce and violent; by all which, and abundance more ill-favour'd Symptoms you might conclude his Heart hot; and his Thoughts solicitous, and indeed the whole Man,  
Body

Body and Soul, to be in an Agony. Now will you call this a Recreation, or a Rack and Torture rather? A Rack certainly, which makes a Man seek to conceal, and heightens those Passions which every good Man endeavours to subdue.

To which we add, that Gaming (and especially at such Games as we are speaking of) doth insensibly steal away too much of our Time from better Business, and tempts us to be Prodigals and Bankrupts of that which no good Fortune can ever redeem or repair. And this is so notoriously true, that there is hardly any Man who sets himself down to these Pastimes (as they are called) that can break off and recall himself when he designed so to do. Forasmuch as either by the too great Intention of his Mind, he forgets himself; or the Anger stirred up by his Misfortunes, and the Indignation to go off baffled, suffers him not to think of any Thing but Reparation of his Losses, or the Hopes he is fed withall trowls him on, so that Business, Health, Family, Friends, and even the Worship of God itself, are all superseded and neglected for the sake of this paltry Game.

ALL which considered, I am really afraid there is more of the Devil in it than we are ordinarily aware of, and that is a Temptation of his to engage us in that, where he that wins most is sure to loose that which is infinitely of more value. Therefore upon the whole Matter, I think it much safer to keep out of the Lists, than to engage; where besides the Greatness of the Stake, a Man cannot bring himself off again without so great Difficulty.

*Phil.* I THANK you heartily for the Freedom you have used with me. We good-natur'd Men,

(as the World flatters us, and we love to be styled) considering little or nothing ourselves, and having seldom the Happiness of discreet and faithful Friends that will have so much concern for us as to admonish us of our Imprudence and our Dangers, as if we were mere Machines, move just as other Men move and prompt us, and so drink, play, and do a thousand Follies for Companion-sake, and under the Countenance of one another's Example: GOD forgive me, I have too often been an Instance of that which you now intimated: I therefore again and again thank you for your Advice, and hope I shall remember as long as I live what you have said.

BUT that you may work a perfect Cure upon me, I will be so true to myself as to acquaint you faithfully with what I apprehend to be the Cause of this epidemical Distemper. I find the common Temptation both to Drinking and Gaming is the Unskilfulness of such Men as myself to employ our Time without such kind of Diversions, especially at this Season of the Year, when the dark and long Evenings, foul Ways and sharp Weather drive us into Clubs and Combinations: If therefore you will deal freely with me herein, and by your Prudence help me over this Difficulty, you will do an Act worthy of yourself, and of that Kindness which brought you hither.

*Sebast.* THERE is nothing, within my Power which you may not command me in. Nor is there any thing wherein I had rather serve you (if I could) than in a Business of this Nature. But all I can do, and as I think all that is needful in this Case, is, to desire you to consider it again, and then I hope you will find the Difficulty not so insuperable as you imagine. It is very true, Idleness is more



more painful than hard Labour, and nothing is more wearisome than having nothing to do: Besides, as a rich Soil will be sure to bring forth Weeds if it be not sowed with more profitable Seed; so the active Spirits in Man will be sure to prompt him to Evil, if they be not employed in doing Good:

BUT this Difficulty which you represent, generally presses young Men only: These indeed having more Sail than Ballast; I mean, having a mighty Vigour and Abundance of Spirits, but not their Minds furnished with a sufficient Stock of Knowledge and Experience to govern and employ those active Spirits upon; no wonder if such Persons, in Defect of real Business greedily catch at those Shadows and Resemblances of it. But what is all this to Men that are enter'd into real Business, and have Concerns under their Hand, and the Luxuriancy of whose Spirits is taken off by Cares and Experience, and especially who cannot (without unpardonable Stupidity) but be sensible how daily the Time and Age of Man wears away.

*Phil.* MAKE what Reflections upon it you please, however the matter of Fact is certainly true in the general, that a Gentleman's Time is his Burthen, (whether he be young or old) and the Want of Employment for it, his great Temptation to several Extravagancies.

*Sebast.* I BELIEVE it to be as you say. But really, it is very strange it should be so, and I am sure cannot be verified without very ungrateful Returns to the divine Bounty, which hath made so ample Provisions for the Delight and Contentment of such Persons far above the Rate of others. It is true, they have less bodily Labour, and no Drudgery

gery to exhaust their Time and Spirits upon, (and that methinks should be no Grievance) but then the prudent Management of a plentiful Fortune (if Things be rightly considered) doth not take up much less Time than the poor Man's Labour for Necessities of Life. For what with securing the Patrimony, and husbanding the Revenue, what with letting and setting his Lands, and building and repairing his Houses, what with planting Walks, and beautifying his Gardens, what with accomodating himself according to his Quality, and hospitably treating his Friends and Neighbours according to theirs, and, to say no more, what with keeping Accounts of all this, and governing a numerous and well-fed Family, I am of Opinion, that the Gentleman hath indeed the more pleasant but a no less busy Employment of his Time than other Men: Insomuch, that I cannot but suspect, that he must be deficient in some principal Branch of good Husbandry, and defraud his Business, that surfeits on Leisure.

MOREOVER, as divine Bounty hath exempted such Men from the common Sweat and Anxieties of Life, by those large Patrimonies provided to their Hands; so the same divine Majesty hath thereby obliged them, and it is expected from them by the World, that they be more publickly serviceable to their Prince and Country, in Magistracy, in making Peace, and several Ways assisting Government, and promoting the Ends of human Society: Upon which Account, as it is very unjust that others should envy and malign them for their Enjoyments, so it is apparent also, that they are so far from having less to do, than their Inferiors, that on the contrary, the Gentleman's Life seems to be far the busier of the two.

BESIDES all this, Gentlemen having usually more ingenious Education, and consequently are presumed to have more exercised and improved Minds, may therefore be able to employ themselves if all other Business ceased, and fill up the vacant Spaces of their Time with such delightful and profitable Entertainment as others are incapable of.

*Phil.* THAT last Point is the Thing I would fain learn, namely, how to fill up the vacant Spaces of Life (as you call it) so as to leave no Room for Temptation to Debauchery.

*Sebast.* I AM heartily glad to see you of that Mind; we will then, if you please, examine this Matter between us, and by that Time we have compared the Period of our Lives with the variety of Business that occurs in it, I am out of all doubt you will be satisfied, that we have neither so much Time as to be a Burthen to us, nor if it were more than it is, should we be at a Loss for the bestowing of it. And this, without resorting to any of the Extravagancies aforementioned.

LET us then, in the first Place, suppose that the Lives of Men at this Age of the World, and particularly in this Climate and Country, amount commonly to seventy Years; for though it is possible here and there one out-lives that Term, yet it is pretty evident, by the most probable Calculations, that there is not above one Man in thirty, or thereabouts, who arrives at that Age: However, I say, let us at present suppose that to be the common Standard.

Now to discover what an inconsiderable Duration this is, let us but ask the Opinion of those that



that have arrived at it, and they will assuredly tell us, that all the whole Term when it is past, seems to be a very short Stage, and quickly over; or if we had rather trust to our own Experience, let us look back upon twenty or thirty Years of our own Lives, which though it bear a very great Proportion towards the Lease of our whole Lives, yet when it is over, seems to be but a little while to us, and that Time, as it is usually pictured, fled upon Wings——

*Phil.* I PRAY pardon me, if I a little interrupt the Thread of your Discourse; you may easily continue it again. That which I would say is this; I can verify the Truth of what you were supposing, by my own Experience, and have often wonder'd what should be the Reason of it, that Men have quite different Apprehensions of Time past, and Time to come. When we look back (as you well observe) upon twenty or thirty Years which are gone, they seem but a trice to us; but if we look forward, and fore-think so many Years to come, we are apt to fancy we have an Ocean before us, and such a vast Prospect that we can see no End of it. Now I ask your Opinion, what it is that puts such a Fallacy upon us, for other it cannot be: Forasmuch as the same Term of Years, whether it be reckoned forward or backward, past or to come, must needs really be of the same Length and Duration?

*Sebast.* It is so as you say. But to give you an Account of the Reason of that different Estimate, I can say but these two Things, *viz.* Either as it is in the Nature of Hope, to flatter us, so all Things seem bigger at a Distance, and whilst they are in Expectation only, than what we find them to be in Fruition. Or else it must be, that what is <sup>be</sup> past

of our Lives we have fresh and lively Remarks upon, by remembering the notable Passages that have fallen out within that Compass, by which Means those equally remote Portions of Time are brought nearer to our Eye.

BUT on the contrary, in the Time which is to come, we can have no Remarks upon it? Because not knowing what shall happen, we have nothing to fix our Thoughts upon; and so it looks like a vast Ocean to us. For you know that Things which are in Confusion seem to be more than the same Things when they are digested into just Order and Method. And in travelling, you observe that twenty or thirty Miles, which we are well acquainted with, and have frequently traced, seems short and inconsiderable; but the same Length of Journey in an unknown Way seems very tedious to us. Thus, I think, it is in the Case you have propounded; but now, if you please, let us pass on where we were going.

I SAY then, suppose the Term of our Lives be about seventy Years, yet in the first Place we must subduct from this Sum a very considerable Part, as taken up in Childhood and Youth, and which slips away we know not how, so as to escape our Observation, being wholly spent in Folly and Impertinency, but certainly lost to all manly Purposes: To which if you add the Infirmities of old Age, (which tho' it do not equally in all Men, yet) always more or less renders some Part of our Time useless; you will think is no unreasonable *Postulatum* if I suppose, that both together take up a third Part of the whole.

IN the next place, let us consider how great a Proportion is taken up in Sleep, in Eating and Drinking,

Drinking, in Dressing and Undressing, in Trimming and Adorning, and, to be short, in the mere Necessity of the Body. I have read of a brave *Saxon* Prince of our Country, who allowed only eight Hours in the Day, for one third Part of his Time to these Uses: But I doubt few Men follow his Example: And if we take Measures from common Experience we shall find that these meaner Offices take up near, if not altogether, half the Time of most Persons. And so another Third of the whole is gone, and only one poor Third remaining for all other Occasions.

THEN again, out of that Remainder, a very great Share will be challenged by necessary Business, the Affairs of our Estate or Calling, and the Concerns of our Families; and these Occasions are so importunate, that they will not be denied without culpable ill Husbandry, nor gratified without large Proportion of the aforesaid Remainder.

MOREOVER, whether we will or no, another Part will be ravished from us by Sicknes and Physick, in visiting and being visited, in Journeys and News, and a thousand Impertinencies; so that he must be a very good and wary Husband, that suffers not great Expences this Way.

AND after all this, here is nothing for Reading and Study, for Meditation, and the Improvement of our own Minds; nay, not for Religion and Devotion towards God, and the unspeakable Concerns of another World, which in all Reason may most justly put in for their Shares.

*Phil.* ALL this is very true; but what do you infer from this Account?



*Sebast.* I DARE trust your Judgment to make Inferences from the Premises: For, in the first Place, I know you cannot fail to observe, that the lightest Matters of our Life have the greatest Share of our Time spent in them: Folly and Infirmary, Infancy and Dotage, take up the greatest room of all: Then worldly Business and Pleasure exhaust the most of that which is left, and the Mind and noblest Interests have least of all left for them.

AND then, secondly, you cannot but note, with Admiration, how very little Share GOD hath even from the best of Men. And you cannot but adore his Goodness, which rewards with eternal Life that little Time in which Men work in his Vineyard. But that which I aim at in this Calculation, is to demonstrate to you, that there is a great deal more Reason that Men should rather redeem Time from lesser Occasions, than lavish it in Impertinencies, that so our weightier Concerns may have the more tolerable Allowances: And to be sure he must be a very soft and feeble Man that after all these Ends are served, can complain, that Time lies upon his Hands, which was the Thing to be proved.

*Phil.* I AM now amazed at my own Stupidity, that could put such a Case to you. LORD! what vain Fools are we that complain of Plenty, when we are rather straiten'd and in Want? What silly Prodigals are we that are so far from sparing sometimes; that we are not so much as frugal, when all these Claims and Demands come in so thick upon us? I have often heard it said, that by keeping a strict Account of Incomes and Expences, a Man might easily preserve an Estate from Dilapidation; but now I perceive, that for the Want of

of a little of your Arithmetick to *number our Days*, we run out our Lease of Life before we are aware; and fancying we have enough to squander away upon every Trifle, we have ordinarily little or nothing left to defray the most weighty Occasions.

AND, with your Pardon, let me tell you, I think now I have found where the Shoe pinches: It is not (I perceive now) a Surplussage of Time which tempts us to seek those Diversions but the mere Vanity of our Mind, which hath a Fondness for them: And then Custom and Example have made them so natural to us, that we think the Time long we are at them. Not that we have much to spare; God knows, we have little enough: But because we think much of all that is otherwise employed. And, this, I doubt, is the true Reason why we are impatient of long Prayers, and offended with a long Sermon; which whoso observes, would perhaps charitably suppose, that the Urgency of Business would not permit us to attend them, but we utterly deprive ourselves of the Pretence, when we complain that Time lies upon our Hands. To speak Truth therefore, we can hardly spare Time for God, because we love Him too little: But we have abundance of spare Time for our idle Diversions, because we love them too much.

*Sebast.* You have hit the very Mark: But let us go on, and suppose, that our spare Time were more than it is, or possibly can be, yet it will be no hard Matter to find out more pleasant, as well as more innocent Entertainments of it, than those now in Request.

FOR, in the first Place, there are some Employments every whit as delightful; such as, in particular, Planting and Gardening, in which a Man may not only have the Pleasure to contemplate the admirable

admirable Beauty and Variety of the Works of God, but by improving the Nature of Plants, by altering the Species, by Mixture and Composition of several Beauties and Perfections into one, by deducing one out of another, exalting one by another, and, in a Word, by giving Being and Continuance to several Things, he becomes a kind of Creator himself, if I may use such an Expression. This kind of Business ministers so many and so ravishing Delights, that I remember *Cato* preferred it before all the Pleasure of Youth, and thought the Entertainment of his elder, a good Exchange for the Voluptuousness of younger Years. Nay, *Epicurus* himself placed a good Part of his Felicity in the Delights of his Garden. And, above all, I am certain that GOD who knew best what Satisfaction were to be found within the whole Sphere of his Creation, and was not niggardly towards Men, made Choice of this for the Entertainment of our first Parents in their State of Innocency, and before their Folly and Sin had damned them to Care and Toil, and the Sweat of their Brows.

AGAIN, there are some Exercises both of Body and Mind, which are very ingenious as well as divertive; such as Singing, Painting and the like. And they are so far from debauching his Mind, or raising his Passions, that they compose his Temper, even to Admiration.

BESIDES, all these, there are Offices of Humanity and Charity, which afford a Man unspeakable Delight: Such as comforting a Friend or Neighbour in his Affliction, or assisting and counselling him in his Difficulties; promoting Peace, and making an End of Controversies; relieving a poor Man in his Hunger. In all which, besides the Satisfaction a Man hath in his own Mind, as it were by Reflection,



Reflection, participates of the Pleasure those Persons find by his good Offices towards them: For, to say nothing of any of the other, what a Refreshment is it to our own Bowels, to observe the Appetite with which a poor hungry Man feeds upon that which you supply him with? And it will do a Man's Heart good to take Notice of the strange Change wrought in such a Person by a bountiful Entertainment; his Countenance more chearful, his Spirits brisk, his Heart light, his whole Temper more sweet and ingenious. All which who can be accessary to without a kind of virtuous Epicurism.

ALL these which I have named are sincere and manly Pleasures, without Noise, and without Danger; which neither raise a Man's Passions, nor drown his Reason: They are neither so fine and spiritual, that the Body can have no Participation of them; nor so gross that the Mind should be ashamed of them. And in some or other of these every Man that pleases may spend his vacant Hours with Satisfaction.

BUT let me now go a little higher; and what if we take in somewhat of the other World to sweeten the present Life? What think you, after all, of Prayer to God, and reading the Scripture? May not a Man bestow some of his Time in these with as much Pleasure as Devotion, and so (to allude to modern Philosophy) fill up the void Spaces of his Life with celestial Matter?

As for the former of them, Prayer, I remember you well observed, that several of those Men who complain as if they were over-burthen'd with Time, yet love to make as short Work with this as they can; wherein they betray either some Measure of  
Atheism

Athiesm in their Hearts, or a great deal of Sensuality in their Affections: And I cannot tell whether they more contradict themselves, or discover their shameful Ignorance of the noblest Pleasures of Life. For besides that it is highly agreeable to the best Reason of a Man, that he should daily pay his Homage to his greatest Benefactor. And besides that, Prayer is the known Way to obtain the divine Blessing, upon which all the Pleasure and Comfort of our Lives depend.

YEA, and it is the very Pulse of the Soul, which keeps the Spirits florid and vital; it answers to the Motion of the Lungs in the Body, and exhales those melancholy Vapours that would suffocate our Hearts: By it we put ourselves under the divine Protection, and our Spirits are heightened and fortified by the Patronage of Him who can secure us against all Assaults and Dangers whatsoever. When we have commended ourselves to the divine Providence by Prayer, our Hearts are at Rest; we are secure sleeping and waking; we are never alone, but have always one to second us; whatever the Success of our Endeavours be; our Minds are quieted; if Things answer our Wishes, we have a double Satisfaction, that God favours us, as well as that our Labours are successful; if Things miscarry, we impute no Folly nor Omission to ourselves, we have done all that was fit for us to do, but it pleased divine Wisdom to disappoint us. Besides the frequent Approach of the divine Majesty puts a Gravity upon a Man's Countenance, checks and keeps down all Exorbitancy of Passions, begets an ingenuous Modesty, and makes Men as well ashamed as afraid to do an unworthy Action.

To all which add, that by the Advantage of our Prayers we are enabled to become a publick Blessing,

sing, and every private Man a Benefactor to the whole World; than which, what can be either greater in itself, or more acceptable to a great and generous Mind? Consequently, what can a brave and publick-spirited Man employ his Time in with more Delight, than in that which (whatsoever his external Condition be) will make him a Blessing, not only to his Friends and Neighbourhood, but to the Country and Times he lives in; that even Kings and Princes are really beholden to him? Nor is it necessary that much Time be taken up herein, to serve all these great Ends; nor much less is it my Intention to commend affectedly long Prayers: A little Time, and a great deal of Heartiness best doth the Business of Religion; and that little so employed will make all the rest pass away the more sweetly and comfortably.

AND then for reading and meditating upon the Holy Scriptures, the Psalmist hath told us, that the good Man's *Delight is in the Law of God, and that therein he meditates Day and Night*: And surely any Man may be able to entertain a few Moments in it. If Curiosity sway with us, there are as admirable Things in the Holy Scriptures as the Mind of Man can desire. If we affect History, we have there the ancientest and most faithful Monuments in the World; those, without which all Mankind had continued in their Nonage and Childhood to this Day, as being so far from able to give an Account of the Beginning of the World, and Original of Things, that they could not have looked backward many Ages, but they would have been utterly bewilder'd in Mists and Fables, as absurd as the wildest Fictions of Poets. Besides, without this Record, all the wonderful Methods of divine Providence (which are the Comfort of the present Age, and the Obligation to Virtue, and Foundation of Piety



Piety and Religion) had been buried in Oblivion.

IF we seek after Knowledge, either natural, moral or prudential, where is there such another Treasury of it to be found as this, where we have not only the Relations and Observations of the wisest Men in all Ages past, but the Discoveries of the divine Majesty, the Depths of infinite Wisdom (that know the true Reason of Things) laid open.

IF we are pleased with this Foreknowledge of Things to come, (as what Man of Soul can chuse but desire to see beyond the Curtain?) then all the Presages, Prognosticks and Divinations, all the most rational Inductions of the wisest Men, are but silly Surmises and idle Dreams to the Predictions of the holy Prophets, which give us Light to the World's End, and a View of another World: And have both assured their own Credit, and warranted our Belief of what is yet to come, by the well known Accomplishment of their former Predictions.

IF we would improve ourselves in Virtue, what surer Rule can we have than the express Declarations of GOD Himself? Who can prescribe to Him what shall please Him, or prescribe to us better than He that made us, and knows what is fit for us to do? And what more full, plain, compendious and higher Institution of Religion can there be than the Holy Scripture?

THIS brings GOD near to us, and us near to Him; here you know his Mind, you see his Nature, and hear him speak; here you may stand as it were upon an *Isthmus* or Promontory, and take a View of both Worlds; this is the Light of our Eyes,  
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the Rule of our Faith, the Law of our Conscience, and the Foundation of all our Hopes. All this together, sure cannot chuse but make the Reading the Scripture become a very serious and yet a very delightful Employment. And now, upon the whole Matter, what think you, may not a Gentleman entertain himself, and his Time without the Relief of Drinking and Gaming?

*Phil.* WHAT think I, say you? Why I think worse of myself than ever I did. I do not wonder now at what you said when we first came together, viz. That you could always find Employment for your Time; but I wonder at my own Folly: For I plainly see that no Man can have Time to be a Burthen upon him that hath come honestly by it; I mean that hath not stolen it from nobler Entertainments, to bestow it upon a Debauch.

*Sebast.* BUT yet this is not all neither. Besides all the fore-mention'd, (and those which I have supposed, without naming them particularly) there is a Way of entertaining ourselves called Study and Meditation. Study, I say, in general; not confined to any Subject, but only directed to the Time God hath given us in the World.

FOR why should we abject ourselves that have rational Souls, an active, vigorous, intellectual Spirit in us? Is not this able to employ itself, our Time, and our bodily Spirits too? Is not our Mind large enough to embrace the whole World? Can we not bring upon the Theatre of our Imagination all the Occurrences of Time past, as well as present? Must we needs only pore upon the Things just before our Eyes? Must our Understandings be fallow and barren, unless they be continually stirred

up by our Senses? Are our Souls only given us for Salt to keep the Body sweet, or servilely to cater for our inferior Powers; and not rather to subdue and govern them?

WHY should we not remember we are Men and improve our best Talent, sharpen the Sense of our Minds, and enlarge and greaten our Spirits? what hinders but that a Man may converse with himself, and never have better Company than when he is most solitary? How can a Man want Company that hath an angelical Nature within him; or need Diversion, that hath the whole World before him to contemplate?

WHAT should discourage or hinder Men from this Course? Is it the Pains and Difficulty? Nothing in the World is pleasanter when a Man is once used to it. Is it for fear we should exhaust ourselves, and, like the Spider, spin out our own Bowels in our Web? There can be no Danger of that, an immortal Soul never wears out. And should there be no great Fruit from our Study, at least, this is gotten by it, that we employ our Time and keep ourselves out of Harm, which is as much as we now seek for.

*Phil.* It is generally the Fault of contemplative Men to out-shoot the Mark, and whilst they talk finely, to deliver very unpracticable Things. Pardon me, dear *Sebastian*, if I suppose this Infirmary hath accompanied you at this Time. No doubt but Meditation is a noble Entertainment of Time; and questionless, he that hath once got the Knack of it, nothing in the World is so pleasant to him: But you must consider, there are very few who have so much Command over themselves, as to hold their Minds long steady and intent, and perhaps



haps fewer that have sufficient Knowledge to employ their Thoughts at Home; it requires a Stock for a Man to be able to set up this Trade by himself. Your Advice therefore is very good for them that can receive it; but this is no *Catholicon*, no general Receipt.

*Sebast.* I THANK you, Sir, most heartily for the modest and seasonable Check you gave to the Career of my Discourse: I must confess, upon second Thoughts, that all Men are not fit for Meditation, yet I must tell you withal, I suspect more are unwilling than incapable, and I doubt some are more afraid of awakening their Conscience, than stirring their Spleen by it. However, I have another Expedient to propound, (for the Purpose we are upon) which will supply the Place of the former, and which, I am sure, can be liable to no Objection; and that is, Conference or Discourse: Which when I have recommended to you, I shall have delivered my whole Mind.

God hath given us Speech to express ourselves to one another. We are not left alone in the World so, but that every Man hath some Friend or Neighbour to hold Correspondence with: Why should we not then entertain ourselves, our Friend, and our Time in friendly Communication, without the Help of the Bottle? This requires no great Intention of Mind, no great Stock is required in this Case; and by this Way we may not only divert ourselves, but clear our Thoughts, enlarge our Experience, resolve one another's Difficulties, and mutually please and profit one another.

AND the more effectually to recommend this Expedient to you, I will first take the Confidence

to affirm, and do not doubt but I shall by and by make it appear, that this is not only a very genteel and creditable Way of Conversation, but also (if it be rightly practised) a most pleasant and delightful, and (which perhaps may seem the greatest Paradox of all) one of the most healthful Exercises in the World.

THE first of these you will easily grant me, when you consider, that Discourse is that which principally distinguishes a wise Man from a Fool. For, what else do we take our Measures of one another by? If a Man discourse of weighty Matters, and keep close to the Point, and speak sharply in the Case, we account him a worthy Man. But contrariwise, if he talk flatly, insipidly and impertinently, we have no Esteem or Reverence for such a Person.

IT is certain we cannot know a Man's Thoughts, 'till he expresses them: A Fool, we say, is a wise Man so long as he holds his Peace, and Man differs nothing from a Fool 'till he speaks. For a Man's Actions may be by Rote, or Custom, or the Direction of some other Person, but a Man's Discourse is his own. *Out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*, said our Saviour. The Tongue will betray not only the Inclinations of the Heart, but the very Sense and Capacity, and the latter much more than the former, (as the Liquor will carry the Tincture of the Vessel.) 'Tis possible, indeed, for an evil Man to talk virtuously, and a silly Man may get into a Road of wise Sayings: But the Lesson he hath conn'd will soon be at an End, and then he will no more be able to hold out at that Rate, than a flaw'd Vessel to make the same Sound with a good one. Wisdom and Folly are widely different in their Natures; but

but it is Discourse that lays them open, and makes the Distinction conspicuous.

BUT now for the vulgar Methods of Conversation, which commonly consist of Drinking and Gaming, they are no better than levelling Practices, that observe no Distance, nor make any Distinction among Men; the Master and Servant are at *Hail Fellow*, the Gentleman and the Clown are upon the Square with one another; the Man of Parts and Learning and the veriest Idiot and Coxcomb are upon even Ground in those Entertainments.

As for Drinking I cannot sufficiently wonder at that Abjection of Mind in Persons of Quality, who, as if they consented to their own Degradation, will contend for Victory with their Inferiors at equal Glasses; when it is notorious, that a Porter shall bear more than a Gentleman; and a fine Wit shall be baffled and disordered with that which a thick-skull'd Sot will carry away well enough, and come off as wise a Man as he enter'd. But suppose the Gentleman should out-do the Clown, and the Wit the Dunce; yet as the Match was made very imprudently, so the Victory would be inglorious.

AND then for Gaming, I have heard of an Ape that has been too hard for his Master at that most ingenious Game at Chesh: But I have known one very near to a Natural, that hath been a great Master at it. And certainly it is very easy to imagine that in those other Games that are governed by Chance, the Victory may fall to the less worthy Person. It seems therefore a very mean Thing to be eagerly intent upon that to which a wise Man hath no better Title than a Fool, and if we be-



lieve the Proverb, much less. To be sure no Man can be so vain as to think himself the wiser or better Man for his Conquest. But, now, Discourse discriminates Men's real Abilities, and bears an impartial Testimony to a Man's Worth; and the Contests of Reason are therefore truly honourable because the wiser Man is sure to have the Victory.

BUT then secondly, for the Pleasure of Discourse, it cannot be doubted, but that the higher Powers in a Man are attended with the sweetest Delights in the Exercise of them; and the more strong and vigorous those Powers are, the more quick must the Sense of their peculiar Pleasure be. This the Experience of all studious Men bears testimony to, among whom one Truth sifted out by Reason, is more pleasant than all the Entertainments of an Epicure.

AND now in the last Place, for that seeming Paradox concerning the Wholesomeness of discoursing: It is observed, that they who are curious of the Health of their Bodies, to the end that they may invigorate all their Powers and Faculties, have to that Purpose found out appropriate Exercises to all the principal Parts: For so, they say, Walking is peculiarly good for Digestion, by gently agitating the Stomach and Bowels; Riding is singularly beneficial to the Head; the use of the Long-bow is especially commended for opening the Breast and Lungs. Now I think I may be bold to say, that whatsoever each of these is to its respective Part and Member, that will vigorous Conference perform to the whole Man. For as to the very bodily Powers, it warms the Heart and Stomach, dries the Brain, opens the Lungs, quickens the Motion of the Blood, and brings a  
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fresh and florid Colour into the Face and whole Habit. And then as for the better Part of Man; Discourse raises the Fancy, exercises the Memory, clears the Thoughts, enlightens the Judgment and improves the Reasoning.

AND now I appeal to you, judge whether I have performed my Promise or no: If I have, then, besides all the afore-mentioned, here is a manly Employment of Time always at hand; an Exercise that every one is capable of that hath a Tongue in his Head, and a Soul in his Body. Thus we may treat our Neighbour, and cost us nothing but what we (it seems) have too much of, I mean Time. And thus we may profit ourselves, and oblige him too beyond all other Entertainments.

*Phil.* I HAVE a great Reverence for your Judgment; but, in Truth, I cannot tell what to say to this gossiping Kind of Diversion, and 'till this Moment I never thought Lip-Labour had been of such Value. As for thinking Men, the World is content to let them enjoy the Reputation of being wise, or at least to suspend their Judgment of them 'till they see the contrary. But as for talkative Men, (I need not tell you) they have ever been accounted troublesome and impertinent. And for our own part, good *Sebastian*, give me leave to say, that your Practice confutes your Doctrine; for after all you have spoken, in the Commendation of Conversation; and notwithstanding that every one who knows you, knows your singular Dexterity in managing any Subject; yet you, of all Men, are generally observed to be the most silent and reserved.

*Sebast.*

*Sebast.* I SEE plainly that there is a wrong as well as a right Handle to every Thing, and a continual Proneness in Men to mistake one another. Whensoever any Vice is censured, or exposed, Men presently think the contrary Extreme must needs be the Virtue: So whilst I have been recommending friendly Conference, you represent me as if I had pleaded for impertinent Talkativeness; which, truly, I am so far from, that I think the World doth that Sort of Men no Wrong in the Censure it passes upon them; amongst whom, (if it be a wise Man's Lot to be cast) he will think himself in the Region of Parrots; and for his Deliverance, be tempted to pray for Deafness as a great Blessing. No, *Philander*, no; I would neither have Men say all they can, nor much less talk whether they can or no; but I would have them first think to direct their Speaking, and then speak that a Judgment may be made of their Thoughts: I would that Men should bend their Minds whenever they relax their Tongues, and try the Strength of one another's Heads in Reasoning, rather than in Drinking.

BUT then, as for what yourself or others have observed of my Carriage in Company, I confess the Observation is rightly taken, and I will ingenuously assign you the Occasions of it; which are (as far as I know myself) such as these: In the first Place, it sometimes falls out, that the Subject which other Men are discoursing of, is not very agreeable to my Mind: Now in this Case I am generally silent; at least, 'till I can turn the Stream of Discourse some other Way.

AGAIN, sometimes I am in the Company of those who are every Way my Betters; and there I think



think it is much more adviseable to hear than to speak, as it is better to reap than to sow.

SOMETIMES also I meet with a Company of defultorious Wits, who skip so hastily from one Thing to another that they over-run me; and whilst I am meditating what to say pertinently to the Question in Hand, they are gotten into another Subject: A Man must ride Post, or be left behind by such Discourfers.

BUT let that be as it may, or however my Practice falls short in my Counsel, I am certain my Example is not sufficient to counter-balance the Reasons I have given. Wherefore let me again heartily recommend it to you, not only for its own Benefit; but it is were but to supersede those other soft and silly Diversions which have of late so far usurped upon human Society, as well nigh to ingross to themselves all Men's vacant Hours, and a great deal more.

*Phil.* You have the Ascendant of me, and may persuade me to what you will: But, good Sir, do not convert me from a good Fellow to a prating Fool. If I had been used to study, as you have, I might have been in a Capacity to please myself, and perhaps the Company too with Discourse; but for Want of that Education, Silence will generally be my best Discretion.

*Sebast.* Books! It is neither Books nor much Reading that makes a wise Man. How many shrewd Men have you known, and very well accomplish'd in most Parts of Conversation, that never had any great Matter of Clerkship? And on the other Side, amongst the great Number of those that have had the Advantages of bookish Education,

tion, how few are those that are really the better for it? With many Men, Reading is nothing better than a dozing Kind of Idleness, and the Book is a mere Opiate that makes them sleep with their Eyes open. It is perverted into an Antidote against thinking wisely, and made a creditable Pretence for Dismission of Business. Such Mens studying is only an Artifice to reconcile the Ease and Voluptuousness of Sloth with the Reputation of Wisdom; a gentle and wary Kind of Epicurism, that surfeits without Pain or Shame, and in which Men spend their Time without Profit to themselves, or Usefulness to the World.

AGAIN, there are some with whom Bookishness is a Disease: For by overmuch Reading they surcharge their Minds, and so digest Nothing. They stuff themselves so full of other Mens Notions, that there is no Room for their Faculties to display themselves. Such as these, after all their Reading, can no more be accounted learned, than a Beast of Burden may that carries a Student's Books for him. Only so much Meat is Nourishment to the Body as a Man can digest, as he can apply to the Reparation of his Body, when he can separate the Superfluities, and be stronger and lightsomer after it; more than this breeds ill Humours, obstructs the Passages, and impairs the Health, instead of advancing it; and so much Study only is profitable as will excite a Man's Thoughts, as well as afford Hints to the Mind, or as will furnish him with Matter for Meditation and Discourse; which two last Things are the two great Instruments of improving ourselves, and therefore are to prescribe the Measures of our Study and Reading.

WHERE-

WHEREFORE it is well said by a great Man of our Country, that Reading indeed might make a full and copious Man, but Meditation made a sound Man, and Discourse a clear, distinct and useful Man. For Reading, at most, doth but make a Man's Mind equal to that of the Author he reads; but Meditation sets a Man upon the Shoulders of his Author, by which Means he sees further than he did or could do. Or whereas the one may fill up the present Capacity of a Man's Mind, the other, *viz.* Meditation, stretches and enlarges those Capacities. And then for Discourse (which is that we are now speaking of) besides the Advantages which it hath in common with Meditation, it opens and unfolds a Man's Thoughts, and so brings his Notions to a Test, and makes Proof of the Solidity or Weakness of his Conceptions: By which Means, as on the one Hand he shall not run away with the Shadows of Things instead of the Substance; so on the other Hand, when his Apprehensions are sifted, and approved to be right and sound, his Mind will be confirmed against wavering, and he will become constant and consistent with himself. I have often observed, with equal Pleasure and Wonder, that by the mere propounding a Difficulty to another, I have been presently able to resolve that which was too hard for me, whilst I revolv'd it in my own Breast. For, by that opening and unfolding of our Thoughts, we let in Light to our own Judgments, and see clearer than we did before.

BESIDES, a Man is too apt to have a partial Fondness to the Issue of his own Brain; but when he hath brought his Conceptions to the impartial Touch-stone of other Men's Judgments, and as it were try'd them by the Light, he will neither be



be apt to be upon all Occasions over-confident, peremptory and dogmatical; nor on the other Side will he stumble at every Rub, and stagger at every Objection, and so give up the best Cause upon the slightest (but unforeseen) Attack.

AND there is one Thing more very considerable in this Matter; namely, that by Conference a Man is accustomed to methodize and digest his Thoughts in Order; by which Means his Notions are not only rendered more beautiful, but are more at Hand, and also more perspicuous and fitter for Use. Whereas contrariwise (let a Man have read ever so much, and meditated too into the Bargain) without this Expedient all his Notions will lie very oddly and confusedly, and come out all in a Heap or Huddle. In sum, he that uses himself only to Books, is fit for nothing but a Book; and he that converses with no Body, is fit to converse with no Body.

*Phil.* IN Truth, *Sebastian*, tho' I am very sensible of my own Defects in Point of Learning, yet in that little Experience which I have had in the World, I have seen so many Instances of the ill Use, or rather no Use that some Men have made of it, that I am not wholly convinced there is some Truth in what you say, but am the better inclined to be content with my own Education. I have known some mighty bookish Men like full Vessels without Vent, as if they were troubled with the Gripes; their Notions ferment in them, but they cannot utter them either to their own Ease, or the Profit of others. And again, some Men's Learning hath served only to make them pedantick and troublesome. Notwithstanding, by your Favour, it cannot be doubted but Learning hath

hath mighty Advantages; and I verily think you should speak against your own Conscience, if you condemned it in the general. Wherefore you must excuse me if I continue of the Opinion, that it is next to impossible, without more of it than I can pretend to, to hold such Conversation as you are putting me upon.

*Sebast.* EXCUSE me, I do not put a Slight upon Learning, or the Means of it, Books and Study: I know well it is of admirable Use in a wise Man's Hand, because it gradually opens Mens Minds, and both gives them a quicker Sight, and affords them a larger Prospect. All I was saying was only this, that neither you nor any Man of your Capacity, ought to discourage yourselves upon the Pretence of your lesser Advantages that Way; forasmuch as a wise and good Man may (tho' perhaps not with the same Ease) with a very little of it, maintain an ingenuous and profitable Conversation.

*Phil.* PERHAPS it may be so as you say: But then certainly a Man must have very extraordinary natural Abilities to supply that Defect.

*Sebast.* THAT needs not neither: For Discourse will both supply the Want of acquired Abilities, and also improve the natural. I suppose you remember the Saying of Solomon, *As Iron sharpeneth Iron, so doth the Countenance of a Man his Friend.* I confess I have heard that Passage of the wise Man apply'd to the Comforting a Friend in Adversity, which certainly doth mightily support a Man's Spirits, when he finds that he is not forsaken of his Friend, but owned by him in the lowest Ebb of his Fortunes. But I think it is every whit as true and applicable to that we are speaking of, as if he had said, that the Company and Conversation

tion of a Friend doth as well quicken a Man's Wits, and improve his Understanding, as one Iron Instrument is sharpened by another. For, as I said before, Conference and Discourse give us the Advantage of whatsoever he (we converse with) hath read or thought upon that Subject, and so we reap the Benefit of his Reading and of his Meditations too. And then besides that, we exercise our own Judgment upon the Matter so digested and prepared for us; the very Presence and Attention of our Friend sharpens the Attention of our Minds; his Question prevents our Extravagancy and Wandering, and keeps us in a Method, and his Expectation from us holds our Thoughts close and steady to the Point in Debate. By all which, not only the Stock of our Knowledge is improved, but the Patrimony also: I mean the very Powers of the Soul. In Consideration of all which, that great Man of our Country, whom I cited but now, doth not stick to pronounce, that if it should be a Man's hard Fortune to have no Body to converse withal, it were better he should talk to a Post than not to open his Mouth at all.

*Phil.* I BEGIN to think something better of myself, and am resolved to try what may be done. But what would you have a Man discourse about? I am afraid, if there be not some Care in the Choice of a Subject, all will degenerate into Gossiping and impertinent Chat.

*Sebast.* THERE is no Need of Solitude in that Particular, forasmuch as any, even the most obvious Subject will enable us to attain the End we aim at, provided it be followed home; I mean, talk of what Matter you will, if you do not talk flatly and carelessly about it, but set your Thoughts on work, and they will bring forth both Pleasure and Profit,



Profit. For the Exercise of our Minds improves them, as well as that of the Body doth the State of bodily health; and whilst our Thoughts are intent, though we are insensible how Time slips away, yet we shall be sensible in the Conclusion that we have not quite lost it.

BESIDES, you have observed Musicians to make the most curious Descant upon the plainest Ground. It is not therefore the Theme, but the Prosecution of it that is considerable; for, as I said, let that be what you will, if you pursue it with a Train of Thoughts, and especially if you be vigilant to take Notice of, and apprehend those Hints that will thence be occasionally started, you shall quickly be amazed to find yourself led, before you were aware, into some spacious and beautiful Field of Contemplation.

NOTWITHSTANDING, I acknowledge to you, that the pitching upon some good and useful Subject at first, is both the shortest and the surest Way to attain our End. For the very Importance of a weighty Affair naturally rouses up our Minds, and collects and fixes our loose and scattered Thoughts; as you shall seldom see any Man drouzy and inattentive whilst a Matter of Consequence to his Life, or Credit, or Fortune is in Agitation.

THEREFORE, if indeed you would awaken your Senses, and improve yourself and your Time together, let me, above all Things in the World, commend to you religious Communication, talk of the Concerns of a Soul, and of another World. This is a Subject of that Weight and Moment, that it cannot fail either to make you intent, or the Company you shall be in grave and serious;

and it is withal so vast and large, that you can never fear to be run on Ground; for it will always afford you fresh Matter of Discourse.

*Phil.* It is true, the Subject is copious enough, and I may be sure to have it all to myself, because no body will talk with me about it. Who is there now-a-days that troubles his Head with Religion, or especially makes it any Part of Conversation? If, perhaps, any Mention of it fall in by the bye, it is presently let fall again, as if it were too hot for Mens Fingers; and at most it is made but a Kind of Parenthesis, which may be kept in, or left out of the Discourse without Interruption of the Sense. You have found me out a Subject indeed, but now you must seek me out Company to treat upon it. For as the World now is, this will seem so irksome a Business, that no Time will be so tedious as that which is spent upon it, and so we have lost the whole Design we were levelling at.

*Sebast.* WHO (say you) will discourse of Religion? Why every body sure that thinks of it. For tell me, is there any Man so absurdly vain as to think he shall not die? Can any Man that observes the frail Contexture of his Body, and the innumerable Accidents he is subject to, think himself immortal? And when he sees Men daily drop away and die in their full Strength, can he be so fond as to imagine he shall escape the common Lot? And seeing what happens to another Man To-day, may befall himself To morrow; or however, he is certain that he cannot be of any long Continuance in this World; who, I say, that is sensible of this, can chuse but pry beyond the Curtain, and bethink himself what shall come after?

DOTH

DOETH not every wise Man provide for what may be? and do not even the most cold and incredulous suspect at least there may something concern us after the present life? and is there any Man that can, if he would never so fain, quite rid his thoughts of it? Sure therefore every Man that thinks he shall die (that is, every Man that lives) thinks something of Religion, if it be but for fear of the worst. Perhaps you will say, there are some Men, who tho' they know they shall die, yet think they shall die as the Beasts die, and have no Concern hereafter: But are they worthy to be accounted Men that can fancy such a Thing? Is it probable, that a Creature of this admirable Make should be only designed to be a Pageant for a day, and be totally dissolved at the Date of this short Life; especially if he consider withall, that these Powers and Capacities, which Man is endued with, not only put him upon the Thoughts, and Expectations, and Desires of another state; but render him marvellously fit for it, and capable of it; insomuch that several of the noblest of these Endowments are wholly in vain, if there be no such Thing, and that a Man died as the Beasts do.

BESIDES all this, doth not every Man that hath Eyes in his Head, to observe the admirable Structure of the World, conclude that it must be the Workmanship of a God, and he a great, a wise, a good, and a just Being; and can he think so, and not resolve there must be a great Necessity of, and Reality in Religion? that is, in the reverend Observation of that great Majesty that deserves it, and who hath both made us capable of performing it to Him, and obliged us thereunto.



Now if all, or but any Part of this be true, who is so mad as to have no Concern for this God, Religion, and another World, and who is there that having any Concern for them, can chuse but think fit to make it some Part of his Business, the Employment of some Part of his Time, and the Subject of his most serious Debates.

*Phil.* I READILY consent to you that the Business of Religion is a most serious Affair, and worthy of the greatest Consideration; but besides that there are few will correspond with a Man in Discourse about it: To tell you truly, I am somewhat of Opinion, that it is not fit for that kind of Treatment. As it is a sacred, so it is a secret Thing, transacted only between God and a Man's own Conscience, and therefore is rather the Theme of a Man's Thoughts, the solitary Employment of his own Heart; and so fit to be kept up in the Closet of his Breast, and not so proper Matter for Discourse.

*Sebast.* I READILY yield that the Soul and Spirit of Religion is very retired and inward; and so unacceptable to other Men, that they can neither see it, nor judge of it. But tho' the first Source and Springs of it lie very deep, yet why the Streams of it should not issue forth, both in Words and Actions. I cannot comprehend. The apostle saith expressly, *With the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made to Salvation.*

*Phil.* O PARDON me, Sir! I make no Question, but that when a Man is called to make Profession of his Faith, and to discover what Religion he is of, then to dissemble is to betray it, and to be silent on such a critical Occasion is to apostatize

tize from it; and in that Sense (I take it) another Apostle hath required us, *To render to every Man that asketh us a Reason of the Hope that is in us.* But this is not the Case: We are not now speaking of what must be done upon an authoritative Inquisition into our Consciences: But what is to be done in Times of Peace, and in common Conversation: And then, and there I am still of Opinion that, at least, it is not an express Duty to talk of Religion.

*Sebast.* NOR do I differ from you therein. For I do not assert it as an universal Duty to make Religion the Matter of our Discourse: But my Meaning is, that it will exceedingly become us to do so sometimes. And I assure myself, that he that hath a quick Sense of God upon his Mind, will have savory Expressions of him upon ordinary Occasions, (if a foolish Modesty do not overcome him) as well as witness a good Confession in Times of Persecution: For as our Saviour said, *Out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh.* And it seems to me more easily conceivable, that there should be a great Fire without any Smoke, or a great Light without any Heat, than that such a Man as is inwardly principled with the Fear and Love of God should be either able or willing altogether to stifle and suppress his Sentiments. *Can a Man carry Fire in his Bosom, (said the wise Man) and not be burnt?* Such an holy Fervour as I speak of will assuredly both seek and find a Vent for itself and break out, upon all fitting Occasions, in reverend and affectionate Expressions: By which Means a Man, in the first Place, eases his own Breast; and besides, thus this holy Fire not only preserves itself from Extinction, but propagates itself also, warming and inflaming others.

You

You have heard, I suppose, of an odd Superstition among the *Jews*, who out of a pretended Reverence to the Name of GOD, so long forbade the common Pronunciation of it, 'till at length, they had quite forgotten how to pronounce it. And thus I am afraid it will fare with Religion, if Men should (out of I know not what Conceit) forbear all Discourse of GOD and another World; the Result would be, that in Time both would be forgotten. Nor is it (as you seem to imagine) only Times of Persecution that ought to rouse up our Spirits, and call for Expressions of our Zeal; for the Road of Business, the successively flowing Tide of Entertainments in this World, and the Rust upon our Minds contracted by lying still in Ease and Security, more endanger the State of Religion than those trying Times you speak of. And therefore Atheism is well known to be a Weed that thrives most in the best Weather. The Seed that was sown upon stony Ground fell away when the hot Sun scorched it, because it had no Depth of Earth: But that which was sown among the Thorns was choaked too, tho' the Soil was never so good: In a word, stormy Weather in the Church may tempt Men to be false and treacherous, but I believe it never made an Atheist; that and Prophaneness are the ill Fruit of Prosperity. So that you see there is Need that the Spirit of Piety should exert itself as well in the one Season, as in the other.

NEITHER will the publicly stated Times, or Forms and Exercises of Religion sufficiently secure it against this Danger, without such voluntary Efforts and Sallies of it as we are speaking of: For in regard GOD is not to be seen, and the World is before us; the World to come is at Distance, and the present World at Hand; ill Examples are numerous,



merous, and good ones few and rare: And, in a Word, we dwell in so cold a Region, that we had need not only to use a great deal of Exercise, but frequently to rub up one another. Therefore, as *Socrates* is said to have brought down Philosophy (*è Cælo in Urbes*) from Speculation to Practice, from high Notions to the common Affairs of Life; so it seems necessary to us, not only to be religious at Church, in our Closets, but in our daily and ordinary Converse.

AND I verily believe the Apostle, when he forbids that any corrupt Communication shall proceed out of our Mouths; and enjoins, that it be such as is good, to the Use of Edifying, intended we should interpret the latter Expression by the former, viz. that instead of rotten and filthy Talk, we should tend so earnestly to the contrary, that we might turn the Stream of Mens Discourse to that which is virtuous and profitable. And when he adds, that it may minister Grace to the Hearers, I think he requires that very Thing which I have been recommending to you; namely, that we should take all fair Opportunities of bringing Religion into Plea, and of suggesting good Meditations to one another.

*Phil.* GIVE me Leave to go a little farther with you. What Kind of religious Conference is it you would be at? Would you have Men enter into Disputes about Divine Matters? This I the rather ask, because there is a Sort of Men, who seem to be mighty zealous of Religion; but their Heat breaks out wholly this Way, and they fill the Place wherever they are with Noise and Clamour, with Dust and Smoke.

*Sebast.* It is not disputing in Religion that I would provoke you to; but the Improvement of the

the indisputable Rules of it, *viz.* to make yourself and those you converse with, sensible of the vital Principles and Powers of Christianity; not to chafe one another into a Passion, but to warm one another's Hearts with Devotion. By wise and affectionate Applications to beget an equal Fervour of Spirit. And, in a Word, that when Friends are met together, they should, like Flint and Steel, raise both Light and Heat by their mutual and amicable Collisions.

AND why, I pray you, should not Religion have its Turn in our Conversation? What Reason can be given that pious Men should not discourse as freely of holy Things, as they, or other Men, concerning common Affairs? Why should our lesser Concerns for this World, our secular Business, be the only Subject of our Communication? Why, when some talk of their Trades, their Pleasures, and of News, should we not talk of our Callings, as we are Christians, of the Interests of our Souls, and another World? Why may not we discourse of our heavenly Country, whither we are going, as well as other Men busy themselves about foreign Countries, which, perhaps they never saw, nor ever shall be concerned in?

You yourself acknowledge Religion to deserve the most serious and attentive Consideration; and upon the same Account (if you be consistent with yourself) you will be induced to believe it the most commendable Subject of Discourse, as having all those Advantages that can recommend any Subject to the Debate of ingenious Men; as it were easy to make appear, if it were necessary.

*Phil.* SIR, I value your Judgment, but must make use of my own; if therefore it be not too troublesome

troublesome to you, let me entreat you to make out that more fully; and then I promise you, I will either comply with the Reasons you give, or will shew you mine to the contrary.

*Sebast.* WITH all my Heart, Sir: And, to do it with as much Brevity as may be, I will desire you to consider, in the first Place, whether this Subject, Religion, does not contain in it the most noble and excellent Points of Enquiry, and consequently, be not the most worthy, not only to take up the Affections, but to exercise the Wits of Men upon: Such as, for Instance, about the Nature and Attributes of GOD; the Wisdom of that Providence, that manages and governs the World; the Nature of Spirits, and particularly the Soul of Man; of Conscience, and Freedom of Will; of the Nature and Obligation of Laws; of the Grounds of Faith, and the Efficacy of it; of the Nature of Repentance; of Redemption, and the Way of propitiating GOD to Man; of the Judgment to come, the Resurrection of the Body, and eternal Life; with Abundance more of the like Nature: Points all vastly great and copious, profound and difficult; yet equally necessary and discoverable; such as are able to stir up and provoke the greatest Capacities, and yet invite and encourage the meanest: In a Word, such Things, as that there is Nothing else within the whole Sphere of Knowledge, that either requires or deserves such serious Debates.

AND if you will please to consider well the aforesaid Particulars, especially if you make Trial of the Course I am advising you, you will find these Subjects every whit as pleasant, as they are necessary and important. For what can be imagined able to administer more Delight, than the lively Representation of another World, when Men modestly reason



son together, and endeavour to affect one another's Hearts with the Certainty and unspeakable Felicity of living for ever? Of the ravishing Contentment of enjoying everlasting Friendship; of being out of the Sphere of Mortality, Sickneſs and Pain, Care and Vexation; of being exempted from all Weakneſs, Sillineſs, Paſſion, and Infirmary; of being exalted above all Temptation, and ſecured againſt all Poſſibility of Apoſtaſy: If Diſcourſe of this Nature doth not affect a Man beyond all other, it muſt be becauſe either he hath not the Senſe of a Man, or not the Faith of a Chriſtian.

OR ſuppoſe Men ſhould take a Subject ſomewhat lower, and confer together about the Providence of God, that governs the preſent World: What a beautiful Thing is it to obſerve all the Variety of ſecond Cauſes move in a juſt Order under the firſt, towards certain and uniform Ends, the Glory of God, and Good of Men! And that though the Divine Wiſdom may loſe and confound us in that admirable Maze it ſeems to make, yet there is nothing defective or redundant in the whole World, no Room for Chance, nothing unforeſeen, no croſs Accident that hinders the Projections; the ſame Deſign is all along carried on, and at laſt certainly attained: But eſpecially, if we confine our Contemplations of Divine Providence to that more peculiar Object of his, his Church, it will become yet more viſible, and more comfortable; where, if we wiſely confer Times paſt with the preſent, and view the whole Proceſs, we ſhall find that even Schiſms, Hereſies, Perſecutions, and the greateſt Calamities of the Church, tend to its Advantage in the Conclusion. But, above all, that which comes neareſt to a Man, and muſt needs affect him moſt in the Affair of Providence, is, that thereby he finds himſelf under the Protection of a mighty Being,

ing, that nothing befalls him without the Consent of his great Patron, that he is not left to himself to scuffle with ill Fortune, and second Causes, as well as he can; but he is the Charge of Almighty God, the Favourite of Heaven. This, certainly, is highly pleasant and satisfactory, above any Thing in the World.

OR if we go lower, and make the Subject of our Discourse, Peace of Conscience, the Bravery of a Victory over a Man's Passions or Temptations, the unspeakable Comfort and Satisfaction in doing Good; any of these will afford us an Entertainment beyond the Flavour of Wine, or the odd Variety of Chance in a Game; and indeed, (to speak to the Point) above all other Subjects of Discourse and Conversation. And although it be true that there is none of these, but a Man may contemplate with great Satisfaction by himself alone, and in Solitude; yet as all social Exercises of the Body are more refreshing than those that are solitary, so it is here; the Comfort that results from these Contemplations is doubled and multiplied by Reflection in friendly Conferences: And all this together, shall be my first Argument, by which I recommend Discourse of Religion. What think you of this, *Philander*?

*Phil.* I THINK very well of it: But, I pray you, let me hear out the whole Cause, and then I will give my Answer.

*Sebast.* WHY then my second Plea for religious Discourse, is, from the Consideration that it is far the more safe, prudent, and inoffensive Matter of Communication; and that in several Respects. In the first Place, it kindles no Coals, stirs up no Strife, inflames no Body's Choler, and touches upon no Man's Interest or Reputation. You cannot talk

of yourself without Vanity or Envy; you can hardly talk of your Neighbours, without some suspicious Reflection; nor of those that are farthest off, but you are in Danger that some Body present may be concerned for them: It is very difficult to talk of News, but you will make yourself of some Party or other; and of Opinions without giving Offence where you did not intend it; and you can scarcely speak of your Governors and Superiors, so as to avoid all Imputation either of Flattery or Pragmatism. But here you may talk securely, and have this Assurance, that if you profit no Body, you shall hurt no Body; if you do not benefit others, you shall not prejudice yourself. And then, in the second Place, and in Consequence of the former, this Kind of Discourse will invite no Eve-droppers to listen and carry Tales of what passed amongst Friends in their Families and Privacies. For although there be hardly any Place so inaccessible, or any Retirement so sacred, as to be a sufficient Sanctuary against this pestilent Sort of Vermin; yet besides that Matters of Religion afford them the least Hold or Handle; the discoursing gravely of it, is the most effectual Charm in the World to lay them; so that they shall either not be able, or not be willing to misreport you. To which add, in the third Place, that this Course is one of the most effectual and unexceptionable Ways of ridding ourselves of the Company of impertinent People; which I reckon no small Advantage of this Kind of Conversation: For this serious Way will certainly make them better, or make them weary of our Company; that is, we shall either gain them, or gain our Time from them; the least of which two is very desirable.

ARE not then all serious and sensible Men bound to put to their Endeavour to turn the Stream of Conversation



Conversation from Froth and Folly, to this great and important Concern? If this be out of Fashion, the more is the Shame; and it is a thousand Pities but that we should strive to bring it into Fashion: And to repair the Dishonour to the Divine Majesty by those scurrilous Libertines, who, with equal Madness and Folly, let their Tongues run, riot against Him.

WHAT! shall we be meally-mouthed in a good Cause, when they are impudent in a bad one? Shall we be ashamed to own GOD, when they defy Him? Is GOD so inconsiderable a Being, that we dare not stand by Him? Are Piety and Virtue Things to be blushed at? Is eternal Salvation become so trivial a Thing, that we should be unconcerned about it? Do we yield the Cause to these half-witted Profligates? Do we acknowledge the Gospel to be indeed ridiculous? Or do we confess ourselves the greatest Cowards in the World; and judge ourselves unworthy of eternal Life? For Shame, let us be so far from being either cow'd or bias'd by such Examples, that we resolve to make better where we cannot find them.

BESIDES, I persuade myself, this will be no very hard Thing to do, if we consider the Authority and Majesty of sincere and generous Piety, and the Guilt and Base-spiritedness of Vice and Prophaneness. If we be soft and timorous, that grows rampant and intolerable; but if Virtue shines out in its own Rays, it dazzles and baffles all those Birds of Night. If Men will be persuaded to assert their own Principles manfully, to talk of GOD worthily and courageously, the greatest Ruffians will presently be gagg'd and Tongue-tied: As in Conjurations, (they say) name but GOD, and the Devil vanishes; so enter resolutely into pious Confe-

rence, and it will presently lay all the Oaths, and Blasphemies, and scurrilous Talk of those desperate Wretches.

AND (by the Way) this is the most genteel, and also the most effectual Way of reproving that Kind of Persons; namely, to deal with them as Scholars deal by one another; when any one speaks false *Latin*, they only repeat it after him in true *Latin*, and as it ought to be; so here, let us speak right Things of God when they speak amiss, and there needs no more to damp them; they will either turn on your Side, and speak as you do, or leave the Field to you.

*Phil.* I THOUGHT, when we first entered on this Particular, it was impossible that I should ever be of your Opinion therein; but now I am so far from having any Thing material to object, that I am clearly satisfied it would be a very wise Thing, and well worthy of our Endeavours, to bring it into Practice: I mean as much as possibly we can, to exclude idle Tales and Drollery out of our Converse, or at least to confine them to a narrower Compass, and so make Way for this great Affair of Religion.

BUT yet, let me tell you, though you have convinced me, you have not silenced others: There are those will elude the Arguments they cannot answer, and expose what they are resolved not to comply with. They will say, this talking of Religion is a Mountebank Trick, to impose upon the People; that it is a Design of Vain-glory, or an Artifice to seem better than we are. They will tell you, that sincerely good Men use to be modest and silent, and to enjoy their Sense of Piety in secret. In short, when you have said all you can to recommend this Way of Conversation, they will say, it

is no better than Puritanism, or Enthusiasm; and having affixed such a Name upon it, they will run both you and it down presently.

*Sebast.* HEARTY Thanks for putting me in Mind of that Danger, which otherwise I should not have been aware of. I acknowledge, I am so far unskilled in the World, that I was apt to think it was sufficient to a Cause to be backed with good Proofs; and that when a Business had recommended itself to the Reason and Conscience of Men, the Work was done. I little thought Men must be wheedled into a Compliance with their own Judgments; and much less, that they would be so disingenuous towards themselves, as to put a Cheat upon their own Senses: Nor did I sufficiently consider the Power of Names, to make Good Evil, and Evil Good; and that the best Thing in the World may be run down by the mere Blast of an odious Nick-name. LORD! what a venomous Breath hath common Fame, that it can change the Nature of Things? What a huge *Leviathan* is vulgar Opinion, that it should be able to oppose itself to the best Reason of Mankind, and to Almighty God too?

BUT yet it looks like a Confession of the insuperable Strength of my Arguments, when Men resort to such Subterfuges: It is a Sign they dare not encounter me on the Square, that use such foul Play; and that Men are destitute of Reason, when they betake themselves to Libels and Reproaches.

THAT which I contend for is, that it becomes Men to take all fit and fair Occasions to speak worthily of God, and to make Advantage of friendly Conversation, towards the Improvement of one another in Morals, as well as in secular, or any o-



ther Concerns. And can any one be so absurdly malicious, as to call this Fanaticism? Doth that deserve the odious Name of a Party, which is the great and universal Concern of all Mankind? Is that to be accounted the peculiar *Shibboleth* of a Sect, which speaks a good Man and a Christian? Is that to be made a Mark of Infamy, which the best Men in the World wear as a Badge of Honour? Are we minded that this Word, Phanaticism, should have the Power of an Ostracism, and put a Disgrace upon Men for being too good?

IF Men, in their Intercourses and Communications, deliberated about setting forth of some new God, or at least some new Religion, there were just Cause of such an odious Imputation: But to take an Opportunity to speak of the true God, and the old Religion, gravely and piously, it cannot be that this should be Puritanism, unless it be so to be in Earnest in Religion. Sure it is not the Character of any mere Sect amongst us to love God; and if it be not, then neither can it be so to talk of Him affectionately, since the latter is the easy and natural Issue of the former. *David*, I remember, call'd his Tongue his Glory: And is that alone, of all the Powers of Soul and Body, exempted from any Part in doing Honour to the Creator?

AND now, *Philander*, what is become of that formidable Objection, as you and I thought at first? May not we now adventure to talk of Religion, without the Danger of Fanaticism!

*Phil.* YES, I see clearly we may: But at the worst, if there were some Danger that I should incur the rash Censure of some that I value, and were likely to be call'd Fanatick for my Pains, I would not

not stick to serve so many great and excellent Ends at that Hazard, if I could.

*Sebast.* BRAVELY resolved; my good Friend! Now you speak like a Man, and a Christian: There is the very Point of Virtue. He that is too tender and delicate, hath not the Courage to be good; and he that will venture nothing here, will win nothing in the other World: You know my Sense already, that Good-Nature is an excellent and useful Companion of Virtue; but, as the Case may happen, a little Steadiness is necessary to preserve them both. But, I pray you, why did you put an *if* at the last? After all, do you question whether it be possible to discourse piously?

*Phil.* No, good *Sebastian*, that is not it; for you have convinced me of the Feasibleness, as well as the Excellency of that Kind of Conversation: But you know (as I have said before) that is out of the Road of Discourse; and besides the Difficulty of bringing those one converses with to it, it is natural for a Man to follow his own Bias. If I were once entered into such a Communication, I am sure I should embrace it, and I think I could continue it. But there is a sheepish Kind of Modesty in this, (as well as in other Things) that checks and restrains a Man from beginning that which neither he, nor his Companions have been used to. If therefore you can help me to conquer myself, as well as to answer Objections; to overcome my Temper, as well as to submit my Judgment: I would then set about it as well as I could.

*Sebast.* WITH all my Heart; only with this Condition, as well as I can (as you say.) But I pray give me leave to ask you a Question by the by, and not decline that which you have put to me:  
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The Case is this; it is commonly observed that good Men find such a Modesty (as you speak of) to restrain them, when they are setting themselves to begin some good Discourse; insomuch that sometimes, with great Difficulty (if at all) they can screw themselves up to it: But contrariwise, lewd and prophane Men rant and hector at an intolerable Rate; they will blaspheme and burlesque Religion without Regard to God and Man. Now seeing the former have all the Reason in the World on their Side, and the other as much against them, what is it that makes this Difference in their Spirit and Temper?

*Phil.* THAT I may come the sooner at the Solution of my Difficulty, I will answer your Question as briefly as I can; and I think in these several Causes: First, prophane Men are generally very grossly ignorant; for I cannot imagine that any Thing else should make them bold with Almighty God. The second Cause I assign is, that these Men having abandoned Virtue, they have therewith lost all Good-Nature and civil Respect; and are delivered up to Insolence, and an affronting Humour. And thirdly, I make no great Doubt, but the Devil, whose Work they do, assists them in it. And now you will easily think there needs no other Concurrence; yet I will add another, and that is Drunkenness: For methinks it should be out of the Power of the Devil himself to tempt a sober Man to such a Villainy; but in the Rage of Drink God is defied, and every Thing that is sacred. But now to my Question.

*Sebast.* THE plain Truth is, (as I have acknowledged to you before) I have been in that Oven, and therefore cannot wonder to find another Man there; and though I cannot always conquer my  
 Bashfulness,



Bashfulness, yet in such Cases I always endeavour it, and I will tell you by what Methods; and so I hope the same Remedies may relieve us both.

FIRST then, when I enter into Company, with Design to engage them in good Discourse; I endeavour, if it be possible, to make some Friend privy to my Plot, who, perhaps shall sit at some Distance from me; but understanding his Cue, shall be always ready to second me in what I undertake; and so, by an honest Confederacy, we can carry on the Business. And this I do especially, if I apprehend the Company to consist either of prophane Persons, or captious Wits. For if a modest Man should, in such a Case, begin an unusual Discourse, and have no Body to follow him, he will not only miscarry of his Purpose, but be ashamed and confounded. But if he have one prepared to comply with him, they shall both have Time to recollect themselves, and to carry the Ball of Discourse whither they please.

IN the next Place, when I am destitute of such an Associate, then, if I apprehend I have an Opportunity of discoursing usefully, I resolve to begin whatever comes of it; that is, I forcibly break Silence, though it be with Trembling, and Paleness, and Faultering, and without any well-contrived Expressions; and when once the Ice is broken, the worst is past: Then presently my Colour, and Speech, and Spirits will return. For to proceed is very easy then, because (as I have noted before) the Objects of Religion lie so ready to a Man's Thoughts, that he cannot be at Loss in the Sequel of his Discourse.

IN order hereto, I endeavour to raise in my own Heart a great Zeal of God's Glory, and a generous Design

Design of doing Good to those I converse with : And therefore I think with myself, I am not only to stand upon my Guard, and secure myself from Infection ; nor much less to be a mere Negative, and content myself to do no Hurt to my Acquaintance ; but that it is expected from me, I should benefit them, and season their Intercourse with something virtuous and graceful.

MOREOVER, I endeavour in the whole Conduct of myself, to arrive at a Seriousness of Spirit, and a Deepness of Thought, without which, neither shall I be in Temper to begin or carry on such weighty Discourse with others, nor will they expect it from me : A light, trifling, jesting Spirit is good for nothing but Sport and May-game. Such can ordinarily find in their Hearts to step aside to a Quibble, or a Clinch, are generally Men so unfit for Religion, that they are seldom useful to themselves in any secular Business : But a serious Man hath his Thoughts about him, and his very Mien and Countenance raises the Expectation of the Company, and so they are half prepared to receive his Impressions. Now to bring myself to this Temper, I think frequently of the Judgment to come, and the wonderful Accuracy and Solemnity of it ; of the unspeakable Concerns of Hell and Heaven, and the whole Affair of another World. By these Considerations I curb the Levity and Wantonness of my Spirit, and so become both furnished with fit Thoughts to communicate, and also with a proper Temper to communicate them.

BESIDES this, I make it my earnest Endeavour to be as much above the World as I can ; I mean, to have as indifferent an Esteem of Riches, Fame, &c. as is possible ; for I find by woful Experience, that whensoever it warps that Way, I am listless  
and

and formal in any such Enterprize as we are speaking of: But whensoever I can contemn them, then I am, as it were, all Spirit, and have so lively Impresses of another World upon me, that I can almost make it visible to my Companions.

AMONGST all these, I pray daily and earnestly for GOD's Grace and Assistance, that He will every where be present to me by his Holy Spirit, and put useful Thoughts into my Heart, and give me Courage to express them so, as to beget the like in others.

THIS, Sir, is the Method I take with myself; and having, I thank GOD, often succeeded well with it, against a cowardly Heart of my own, I cannot but expect it will have the greater and more signal Effects upon you.

*Phil.* GOD verify the Omen. However, I thank you most heartily for the Receipt, which I will keep as long as I live.

BUT I must tell you, as my Confessor or Physician, which you will, of another Disease I labour under, so shameful and scandalous, that scarce any Body will own it; and that is Ignorance: If I had Courage enough for the Business, (we have all this while been speaking of) yet I am afraid by my Unskilfulness I shall spoil all: Let me therefore pray you to afford me your Advice in this Case also.

*Sebast.* I WILL tell you the Effect of my Observation in this Matter.

AND the first Thing to our Purpose, which I remark, is, the Example of our Saviour, (and who can we better learn of?) And He, I observe, had  
a Dex-



a Dexterity of applying every accidental Occurrence to his holy Purposes, as it were by a Kind of Chymistry, separating the gross Matter, and subliming ordinary Affairs to heavenly Doctrine: Insomuch, that there was scarcely any common Affair of Life, such as Eating or Drinking, or Recreation, no Disease or Infirmary of the Body, no Trade and Occupation, such as Merchandize or Husbandry, no Building or Planting, Plowing or Sowing; nay, not so mean Employments as Womens leavening their Bread, grinding at the Mill, or sweeping an House, but He spiritualized them, and applied them to his Designs.

Now if we would learn of Him, and endeavour to imitate this Dexterity, we might with great Ease, and without all Violence, surprize Men into Religion; and not only at every Turn introduce pious Discourse, but render the Subject of it intelligible to the meanest Capacities; and withall by those sensible Resemblances give such lively Touches upon the Minds of Men, that what we delivered upon those Occasions would stick and remain with them.

AND there is no great Pains or Skill required for the doing of this; the principal Requisite to it is, a Zeal of God's Glory, and such a constant and fixed Eye upon it as shall make us apprehensive of the Opportunities that present themselves, and then a little Humility to condescend to the Weakness of People.

As for Instance, when we visit a sick Friend or Neighbour, what a fair Opportunity have we to discourse of the Immortality of the Soul? And what an easy Transition is it from a Physician to a Saviour? Or why may we not as well chear up our afflicted

afflicted Friend with the Comforts of Religion, as amuse him with impertinent Stories? Or suppose Friends be together, why may not some Word come in of the everlasting Friendships in Heaven, or of the continual Feast of a good Conscience? Why may not the common Chat about News, be elevated to the Consideration of the good Tidings of the Gospel? What hinders but our Dishes of Meat may be seasoned with a gracious Word or two about the Food of our Souls? When Men are talking of old Age, it would be no great Strain if thence our Thoughts rise up to eternal Life. Nor any great Flight of Fancy is requisite to improve all the Accidents of our Lives, to the Contemplation of Divine Providence, which orders and governs them. In a Word, every Thing is capable of Improvement, if we be not wanting; we shall never want Opportunity, if we embrace it; any Thing will serve an intent Mind, and a devout Heart, to these Purposes.

My second Remark is, upon the Custom of those several Persons in the Gospel, that upon divers Occasions entered into Conference with our Saviour, which I note they always began by Way of Question, or Doubt, as Men desirous to be informed, rather than affecting to teach or dictate. This was not only the Way of *Nicodemus*, *John* iii. of the Woman of *Samaria*, *John* iv. and of the young rich Man, *Matth.* xix. who came in Earnest to be instructed; but of the Scribes and Pharisees, and Sadducees, who came to dispute. This modest Way of propounding a Question, and expecting and replying to the Answer, was the old Way of Disputation. And certainly this is of great Use in our Case, for the more easy Introduction of Religion into ordinary Conversation. When we do not violently break in upon the Company, but

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civilly make our Way; nor abruptly obtrude our Sentiments, but insinuate them; not malapertly reprove other Mens Errors, or superciliously dictate our own Opinions; not throw down our Gauntlet, and challenge the Company to a Combat; but modestly appear in the Garb of Learners, and propound a Case as to Men wiser than ourselves, for our own Satisfaction: This Course, instead of offending, exceedingly obliges those we apply ourselves to; forasmuch as every Man is glad to be accounted wise, and fit to be consulted with.

As, suppose you should ask the Persons you are with, what they think of such or such an Argument for the Immortality of the Soul, or for the Proof of a particular Providence; or ask their Advice, how to answer such an Objection that comes in your Way, against either of those, or any other fundamental Point of Religion: And though such Questions may at first seem merely speculative; yet, if they be pursued wisely, and with that Intention, they will infallibly lead to Practice.

OR, suppose you put a Case about Temperance; as, namely, what are the Measures of Sobriety, so as also to avoid Scrupulosity? How far is worldly Care evil, and how far innocent and allowable?

OR more generally, how a Man may discern his own Proficiency in Virtue; and what Preparation is necessary against the Uncertainty of Life, and to secure the great Stake in another World.

OR, to name no more, what the Company thinks of such or such a Passage in a Sermon you lately heard, or in such a Book? These, and a thousand more such easy Inlets there are into good Discourse,



Discourse, which a little Presence of Mind will improve to what Purposes we desire.

ANOTHER Thing I have learned from the Custom of prudent Men; to insinuate that by a Story, which would not be so well received if it were directly and bluntly delivered. Telling of Stories, you know, is common; and, if a Man have any grateful Way of telling them, and use Prudence in the Choice of them, he hath the Company in his Power, and may lead them to what Discourse he will. And besides, Men will admit of that to be said in the third Person, which they will not bear in the second.

To this Purpose, suppose a Man should have in Readiness a Story of some remarkable Judgment of God upon some notorious Sin, that he would deter those he converses with from, no Body could take Offence at the Story, and yet every Man's Conscience would make Application of it. Or suppose a Man should, in lively Colours, describe some excellent Person, he would not only put all the Hearers into the Thoughts of those Virtues that were so described, but stir up a modest Shame in them for their own Shortness, and an Emulation of so brave an Example. These, and many such other Ways there are, which your own Prudence and Observation will represent to you better than I can, by which a discreet Person may engage any Company (in which it is fit for an honest Man to be found) in good Discourse.

BUT I will not omit, upon this Occasion, to tell you a Story, which I have from very good Hands, of two very eminent Men, both for Learning and Piety, in the last Age, (or rather the Beginning of the present;) the one of them a great

Prelate, (indeed a Primate) and the other a Churchman of great Note. These two great Men, as they often met together, to consult the Interest of Learning, and the Affairs of the Church; so when they had dispatched that, they seldom parted from one another without such an Encounter as this: "Come, good Doctor, (saith the Bishop) let us now talk a little of *Jesus Christ*." Or on the other Side, said the Doctor, "Come, my Lord, let me hear your Grace talk of the Goodness of God, with your wanted Eloquence: Let us warm one another's Hearts with Heaven, that we may the better bear this cold World." And this they performed with that holy Reverence and ardent Zeal, with that delightful Sense and Feeling, that afforded Matter of Admiration to those of their Friends or Servants that happened to be present, or to overhear them. Here is now an Example of holy Conference, without a Preface, and yet without Exception: A Precedent, not only justifying all I have said, but easy to imitate wherever there is a like Spirit of Piety. A few such Men would put Prophaneness out of Countenance, and turn the Tide of Conversation.

*Phil.* I DOUBT I shall never be able to imitate; but I am resolved to write after so fair a Copy as well as I can: Therefore I pray you, if you have any farther Directions for the guiding of my Hand, let me have them.

*Sebast.* ALL that I have to say more, may be summed up in these four following Cautions.

*First*, You must remember that other Discourse, so it be manly and pertinent, is not only lawful, but necessary in its Season.

*Secondly*,

*Secondly*, THAT when Men are in Drink, or in Passion, it is no fit Time to enter on this Subject, for it will be but to *cast Pearls before Swine*; it can do those Persons no Good at such Times, and it may do us Hurt, and Religion too. But when Men are in the calmest and soberest Methods, then is the Time for this Intercourse.

*Thirdly*, IT is very advisable that we make a Distinction of Persons, as well as Times, for this Business. You know the World is not all of a Size: some are our Superiors, others are our Inferiors, or Equals; there are some very acute and learned Men, some dull and ignorant; some are captious, others sincere and plain-hearted; some prophane, and others pious: In a Word, there are Old and Young, Rich and Poor, Cheerful and Melancholy, and Abundance other such Differences in Mens Circumstances: All which require a peculiar Address, if we intend to fasten any good Thing on them.

*Fourthly*, IT is a Matter of Prudence, that our Essays of this Kind be rather perfective, than destructive; that is, that we do not take upon us, authoritatively to quash and controul other Discourse; but rather take Advantage of any occasional Passages and Hints, from whence to improve and raise it insensibly.

*Lastly*, WE should not always harp upon one String; but sometimes designedly lay aside our Business, and then resume it again; as in Musick, we sing and let fall a Note, and by and by get it up again; that by such Variety we may afford the more delightful Entertainment to those that are our Companions. And now, I doubt, I have quite tired you; therefore it is Time to bid you a Good-Night.

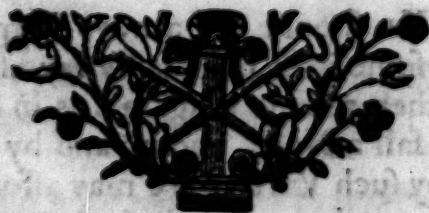


*Phil.* DEAR *Sebastian*, shall I tell you a plain Truth? When we first came together this Evening, your Conversation methought was so much out of the Mode, that though I considered you as an honest Gentleman, yet I suspected I should have uneasy Company with you: But now I fancy you are like some of those old stately Buildings I have seen, which are a little rough and Weather-beaten without; but for all that, are substantially strong, and express very admirable Art within.

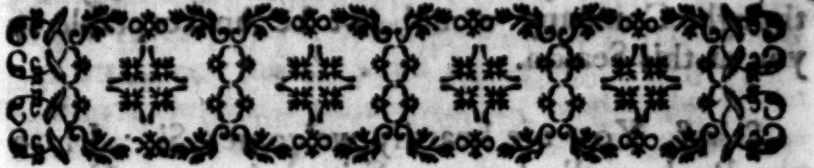
*Sebast.* NAY, then Good-Night again, if you be for Compliments: But if you have any real Value for me, I hope you will now do me the Favour of your Company at my House some other Evening.

*The End of the First Conference.*

6 JY 64



Biophilus. Your humble servant, good Sir.  
 Sir: I know you are a Judicious Pastor; yet I



my looks well, but my friends better. I  
 Gentlemen, will it please you to draw near the  
 Fire? The Weather is very sharp still. A

But the Cold continues; but Thanks be  
 to God, the Evening is now over.  
 Now you talk.

# CONFERENCE,

become colder or warmer upon several Accidents;  
 but seeing the Sun keeps his constant Course, the  
 Interim of a few Days can make no discernible  
 Difference in the Length or Shortness of the Even-  
 ings. AT

## Sebastian's HOUSE.

But here is a Friend with a night robe on  
 At last that a Man to make Time pass

thence, as Pleasure; nay, which perhaps will in-  
 crease your Pleasure, by the evening Coun-  
 ties shall be so incident. A Man I shall have more

I time to spend, and less to spare; more for his  
 Use and Pleasure, and none to be a Burthen to

*Philander.*

**Y**OU see, *Sebastian*, I am as good as my  
 Promise; and at this Time so much bet-  
 ter, as I have brought my Neighbour *Bio-  
 philus* along with me.

*Sebast.* I ALWAYS took you for a Man of your  
 Word; but now you have not only acquitted your-  
 self, but obliged me.

*Biophilus.*

*Biophilus.* YOUR humble Servant, good *Sebastian*: I know you are a studious Person; yet I thought Company would not be unacceptable to you at this Season.

*Sebast.* You are heartily welcome, Sir: I love my Books well, but my Friends better. Come, Gentlemen, will it please you to draw near the Fire? The Weather is very sharp still.

*Phil.* THE Cold continues; but, Thanks be to God, the Evenings are not so tedious since I saw you last.

*Bioph.* How can that be, *Philander*? The Weather, indeed, may change on a sudden, and become colder or warmer upon several Accidents; but seeing the Sun keeps his constant Course, the Interim of a few Days can make no discernible Difference in the Length or Shortness of the Evenings.

*Phil.* BUT here is a Friend hath taught me an Art for that, a Way to make Time longer or shorter, at Pleasure; nay (which perhaps will increase your Wonder) both these seeming Contraries shall be co-incident. A Man shall have more Time to spend, and less to spare; more for his Use and Pleasure, and none to be a Burthen to him.

*Bioph.* CAN Art do that? That is a noble Skill indeed, (if it be possible) to shorten a Man's Time, and yet prolong his Life. Sure you speak Riddles: However, I pray, make me Partaker of the Mystery.

*Phil.*



*Phil.* THERE is no other Secret but this : Good Company and profitable Conversation redeem Time from Folly and Impertineney ; and so we really live longer, and also spend the Time pleasantly ; and so our Lives seem to be shorter.

*Bioph.* THAT is pretty, I confess ; but I had rather it had been literally true.

*Sebast.* I BELIEVE *Biophilus* remembers a Proverbial Saying they have in *Italy* to this Purpose, *He that would have a short Lent, let him borrow Money to be repaid at Easter.* So he that forecasts the Account which every Man must one Day make, how he hath expended the Time of this Life, will not be apt to think the Term of it to be over-long. And he on the other Side, who improves his Time as he ought, and hath his Accounts in Readiness, will not think the Day of Reckoning too soon or sudden.

*Bioph.* VERY good again : But, nevertheless, with your Pardon, Gentlemen, I should argue the quite contrary from your Premises. For, if there be a Judgment to come (as you are pleased to suppose) and that a Man must render an Account of all his Actions another Day : This, methinks, should curdle all his Delights ; and the very Thoughts of such a Thing filling him with perpetual Fears and Solitude about it, must needs make Life very tedious to him. But if there be no such Thing to be feared hereafter, then a Man shall, in Effect, live a great while in a little Time, when there is nothing to disturb his Thoughts, to impeach his Pleasures, or interrupt the Enjoyment of himself.

*Phil.*

*Phil.* YES, even in the Case which you put, Death will be sure to come shortly, and that will spoil his Sport.

*Bioph.* THAT is very true, and very sad: If therefore you would find out a Remedy for that, you would do something to the Purpose. But when you cannot but observe that there are several Sorts of Brute Creatures that out-live Mankind, continue longer in the World, and have as well a quicker Sense of Pleasure, as a more unlimited and uncontrollable Enjoyment of it. If Mankind, after all this, must be perpetually tormented too with Suspicions of what may come after, they are doubly miserable, and under the hardest Fate of all Creatures.

*Schaft.* THAT very Thing which you now observe, is to me a very great Argument of what you oppose. For upon those very Considerations, viz. that the Life of Man in this World is shorter than that of other less considerable Creatures; and that the Pleasure thereof is interrupted also by the Expectation of the future; upon those very Grounds there is great Reason to believe that there is another World, wherein he may have Amends made him for whatever was amiss, or defective here. For it is not credible with me, that such Power and Wisdom as is plainly displayed in the Constitution of Man, should be so utterly destitute of Goodness, as to contrive Things so ill, that the noblest Being should be finally the most unfortunate.

To which I must add, that therefore the Apprehension of a Judgment to come, neither is, nor can be, mere Matter of Dread and Horror (as you seem to suppose); but is either terrible or com-

comfortable, respectively to Mens Preparations for it. I cannot wonder if the Thoughts of it so fright and discompose evil Men, that they could with all their Hearts wish there was no such Thing. But, most certainly, to wise and virtuous Men, it is so far from being formidable, that contrariwise the Hope of it is the very Joy of their Hearts, the Support of their Spirits, their greatest Security against all the cross Accidents of this World, and, in a Word, their Port and Sanctuary.

*Bioph.* THESE are fine Sayings, *Sebastian*; but when it comes to the Proof, I do not find Men in Love with Dying, nor to have so comfortable an Opinion of that other World you speak of; but that they could, with all their Hearts, be content to quit their Interest in the latter, so they might put off the former.

INDEED I have often observed Men, when they have been past all Hopes of Life, to set a good Face on the Matter, and welcome the Approach of Death with seeming Courage: But in this Juncture, let but a Physician appear that gives them any Hopes of Recovery, they presently start back from the Brink of another World, and smile upon the Messenger that brings the good Tidings of Life. I cannot see, therefore, that Men do indeed believe themselves in this Matter.

*Sebast.* THERE is no Doubt, but some Men may talk only, and set a good Face upon that which they have no comfortable Sense of: And no Wonder if such Mens Courage fails them when they have most Use of it. But this is no more Re-approach to true Faith in God, than it is to generous Courage, that now and then you shall see an  
huffing,



huffing, swaggering Hector turn Recreant when he is put to it in Earnest. It is acknowledged to be very easy to vapour when no Danger is near; but it requires real Bravery to stand to it when a Man is briskly encounter'd. Now as you will not say there is no such Thing as Valour, because there are some Cowards that pretend to it; so neither (I presume) will you think fit to suppose there is no Faith, because there is some Hypocrisy.

BUT notwithstanding all, there are certainly, and have been, sundry Persons in the World, who tho' they have had the same natural Affection to themselves, and to the present Life with others, yet have as heartily wished and longed for the great Day as it was lawful for them to do. They know it is their Duty to maintain the Station God hath set them in, 'till they have a fair Dismission; but baiting that Consideration, I doubt not but many a good Man would sue out his *Quietus est*, and gladly embrace an Opportunity of bidding Farewell to the World.

*Bioph.* You say well: But how shall this Case be decided? Where may a Man find any such Person as you speak of?

*Sebast.* PERHAPS you have not heard any Man sing his *Nunc dimittis*; or if you had, it may be you would not have believed him to be in Earnest: But what think you of St. Paul, who professes, *he desires to be dissolved, and to be with Christ*? And particularly, 2 Tim. iv. 7. he foresees a violent Death approaching him, and upon that Occasion, by Way of Contemplation, places himself as it were, upon a Promontory, where he could look backward and forward, and take a View of both

both Worlds; and when he reflects upon that which he was leaving, he finds that he had discharged his Part well and worthily whilst he was in it. *I have fought the good Fight, (saith he) I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith.* But then when he looks forward, and takes a Prospect of what was to come, here he triumphs and exults with Joy; *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which GOD the righteous Judge shall give me.*

OR what do you think of so many thousand Martyrs, who have not only gone out of the World with Smiles in their Faces, and Songs in their Mouths, but have chosen Death when they might have lived as freely, as happily, and as long as other Men? They were not worn out with Age, nor vexed and wearied with Poverty, nor distracted by any Disaster; they had as tender and sensible Constitutions as other Men, as much natural Affection to themselves, and as sound Reason to judge what was best; and yet despised the present Life and World, in Comparison of that to come.

*Bioph.* NAY, as for those Men of old, which you speak of, I cannot tell what to make of them: But I would fain see such a Man now.

*Sebast.* I MAKE no Question but I could direct you to such Men now; but it may be you will not believe they despise Death, because you see them yet living: However, what think you of the Man that hath the Bravery to deny himself those Profits and Pleasures which other Men allow themselves, (so long as they see no Infamy or external Danger attend them)? What think you of the Man that dares be virtuous in a lewd Age,

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and in evil Company; and hath the Courage to confront a whole World with his Example? What think you of the Man that sits so loose to the World, that he can bear Prosperity without being supercilious, and Adversity without being dejected; that can be in Want without repining, and can be liberal without upbraiding? Such Men as these are to be found in the present Age: And wherever you find any such Man, assure yourself, there is a Person that believes himself, or rather, that believes in God; and hath as real a Persuasion of the World to come, as other Men have of that which they see with their Eyes, and touch with their Fingers.

*Bioph.* I BELIEVE there are some such Men as you speak of; and I account them brave and worthy Persons: But, Gentlemen, let us wave this uncomfortable Subject. Come, what good News is there stirring?

*Phil.* O SIR, that is a prohibited Commodity you enquire for; neither of us deal in it.

*Bioph.* NAY, truly, for my Part, I wish it had been prohibited sooner; for there hath been so much Knavery and Sophistication in it, that several well-meaning Men have been cheated of their Peace, their Loyalty, and almost out of their Wits too by it.

BUT so long as we are not bound to believe all that we hear, we may hear what Men talk of, for our Diversions.

*Sebast.* HEARING and telling of News seems to me to be just such another Diversion as Tipling is: And it is much the same Thing, whether a  
Man's



Man's Head be full of Vapours or Proclamations : Wind in the Brain makes Men giddy, as well as Wine ; and Men reel and stagger to and fro as unseemly by the Impulse of uncertain Rumours, as those that are intoxicated with the strongest Liquors. Besides, just as he that knows not how to entertain himself at Home, usually applies himself to the Tavern, or the Ale-house, for his Relief ; so it is the Custom of idle People, and such as are negligent of their own Affairs, to busy themselves in Matters that do not belong to them. And there is yet another Thing worse than all this ; namely, whereas the Tavern Drunkard sleeps and evaporates his Wine, and comes to himself again, the Coffee-house Drunkard scarcely ever clearly dispels those Vapours of News that have filled his Crown.

BUT after all, now I think better of it, I have a very remarkable Story to tell you : But you are so great a Critick you will believe nothing, and therefore I had as good hold my Peace.

*Bioph.* NAY, good *Sebastian*, let us have it: You are a Person of good Intelligence, if you will please to communicate.

*Sebast.* IT is so very strange and wonderful News, that I suspect your Faith ; but yet it is such as puts me almost into an Extacy every Time I think upon it.

*Bioph.* Do not tantalize us with Expectation, whilst you raise the Value of your Story, nor tempt our Fancies to anticipate it.

*Sebast.* WHY then it is the Discovery and Description of a certain Country, which is (by Relation

tion) the very Garden and Paradise of the whole World, so transcendently admirable, that *Italy*, *Theffaly*, or whatsoever you have seen or heard of in all your Life is nothing to it.

*Bioph.* PUGH! Who would have expected foreign News after such a Preface? And all but some *Island of Pines*, I warrant you! Or suppose it should be true, what can it be to us? However go on *Sebastian*; perhaps it may afford us some Diversion.

*Sebast.* I PRESAGED what Entertainment my News would have with you. What can it be to us, say you? Why, when you understand all, you will bless yourself that there is such Place in the World, which you may go to if you please, where you may find Retreat from all Troubles at Home, and be happy beyond Imagination: Nay, let me tell you, you must, you will go to it, if you love yourself.

*Bioph.* You speak at a strange Rate, *Sebastian*; a Man would think you were either strangely imposed upon yourself, or else that you had very mean Apprehensions of our Discretion. But let it suffice to say, that, soberly speaking, there is no Country upon the Face of the Earth can deserve this Encomium. Besides, when all is said that can be said, every Man's own Home is his best Country.

*Sebast.* WHY, do not you understand me? This which I am speaking of, is, or will be your Home too, at least if you will but take the Pains o travel thither.

*Bioph.*

*Bioph.* I MARRY, thank you for that: But I wist it is better to believe than to go look, in this Case. What! Change my native Country, transplant myself at these Years! No, I am too old, and have taken too deep Root where I am for that.

*Phil.* ASSURE yourself, *Biophilus*, there is something extraordinary that *Sebastian* expresses himself thus: He is no Hypochondriack, nor whimsical Enthusiast, but a Man of the driest and best-tempered Understanding.

*Bioph.* I HAVE always thought no less, which raises my Wonder now. Come, pray you, *Sebastian*, tell us plainly what you have to say upon good Grounds, concerning this Place which you are in Rapture about.

In the first Place, let me ask you, what is the Name of this strange Country?

*Sebast.* It is called *Urania*.

*Bioph.* A ROMANTICK Name! But, I pray you, in what Longitude and Latitude is it situate, that a Man may know where to find it, if he should have a Mind to go thither?

*Sebast.* I AM not skilful in that Kind of Learning, neither do I remember that it was told me, in those Terms, how the Country lies; but perhaps this may tend to your Satisfaction: I am assured that they have no Night or Darkness there, for the Sun never goes off their Horizon; nor are there any long Evenings, and tedious Nights, which we complain of in *England*. By this Character, I suppose, you may guess at the Latitude of the Place.



*Bioph.* WELL, I will consider of that at Leisure; in the mean Time, tell us what is said to be the Temper of the Air.

*Sebast.* O SIR, the Air is sweet and temperate beyond Compare; it is *Aether* rather than Air, there is neither violent Heat nor Cold, no Distinction of Summer and Winter; and indeed no such Thing, but a perpetual Spring; so that Flowers blossom, and Fruits ripen all the Year long: And by Reason of this Serenity and Constancy of the Air, the Country is so healthful, that there is never any epidemical or reigning Disease, no Man feeble and languishing; nay, not so much as Wrinkles or grey Hairs upon any Man's Head or Face, insomuch that you would think the Inhabitants were all absolutely immortal.

*Bioph.* If that one Thing alone be true, I warrant you the Country wants no People.

*Sebast.* O VERY populous: Yet by Reason of its prodigious Fruitfulness it can never be overstock'd, for it yields a fresh Harvest of all Kind of Fruits every Month, and that a most abundant one, forasmuch as no Weeds, nor Thorns and Briars grow there, but only that which is good for the Use of Man; and, all this is brought forth spontaneously, without the Toil and Labour of Man.

THEY say also there are no Kind of wild Beasts there, either to affright and annoy the People, or to devour the Fruits of the Land; nay not so much as any Serpents, or other venomous Creatures, or troublesome Insects: And all this is owing to the Clemency of the Air, the peculiar Nature of the Soil, together with God's Blessing upon both.

*Bioph.*

*Bioph.* I PERCEIVE a Man may eat well; and when he hath so done, may sleep in a whole Skin there; that I like, and I would to God it were not a Romance which you give us. But go on, *Sebastian*: What is the Polity and Government of the Country?

*Sebast.* THE Government is perfectly monarchical, and the Prince is absolute; yet all his Subjects enjoy their Liberty and Property as securely and fully as in any Common-wealth in the World.

THERE is no quabbling about Privileges, no interfering between Prerogative and Immunities, Dominion and common Right: The King commands what He will, and the People willingly obey Him; for his Wisdom and Goodness moderate his Will and Power, better than all the Boundaries of written Laws.

AND this I am informed of too, that tho' there be several Degrees of Subjects, as there are amongst us: Yet from hence arise no Emulations amongst the Nobility, nor any Oppression of the Commons: The People do not envy and murmur against the great ones; nor, on the other Side, do they, as greater Fish devour the lesser.

*Bioph.* A RARE Temper of Government, this! and not less admirable than that of the Air you spoke of before: You amaze me strangely. But what are the staple Commodities of the Country?

*Sebast.* As for that, you must know, it is not with *Urania*, as with most other Countries; where usually one Province abounds with what another wants, and the other needs what that can spare;

spare; and so there is a Necessity of reciprocal Intercourse between them, both to relieve their Necessities mutually, and to discharge their Superfluities: And herein, you know, lies both the Reason of Trade, and the Security of Alliances between several Countries in our Parts of the World. But *Urania* being (as was wont to be said of *Egypt*) a Countrey self-sufficient, depends not at all upon foreign Commerce; and therefore as it needs nothing from Abroad, so consequently it sends out few or none of those Commodities it abounds with; but rather invites Foreigners to come over to them, and reside amongst them, and so to partake freely of the Advantages of that happy Land.

YET I must tell you they have very great Rarities in those Parts, and such as are exceedingly desired by all other People that understand the worth of them: As, in particuar, to specify some few, which are not at all to be found any where else.

IN the first Place, they have the true *Elixir Vita*, a very precious Balm, far beyond that of *Gilead*, that perfectly cures all Diseases both inward and outward, I had almost said of Body and Mind. This operates without any Pain to the Patient; and in outward Applications heals all kind of Wounds, and leaves no Scar or Mark behind it.

THEY have also an admirable Water, which so quickens all the Senses, and peculiarly the Sight, that a Man by the Help of it shall see farther than by a Telescope, and pierce into the very Secrets of Nature.

THE



THE common Food of the Country is somewhat answerable to the Description of *Manna*; and hath the peculiar Taste which every Man affects, and satisfies all the Powers of Nature. They have also a delicious Wine called *Lacryma Christi*, which amongst other Virtues makes Men forget all Sorrows whatsoever: And this they usually drink in an Amethyst Cup which preserves them from Surfeits or Intemperance, what proportion soever they drink.

AMONGST the rest, they have a Sort of *Nitre*, so very powerful and absterfive, that it takes away all Spots, Blemishes, and Aspersions, and makes those that use it so very beautiful, that they ravish the Eyes of Beholders.

It were endless to go about to enumerate the Commodities of this Country, which clearly outgoes the *Holy-Land*, tho' it was said that in *Solomon's Days*, Gold and Silver were there as common as the Stones of the Street. And for Proof of it, the Inhabitants are so rich and prosperous, that there is not one poor Man in the whole Land; not one to be found that doth need, or will ask an Alms. The Hungry and Naked, those grievous Spectacles, (too sadly common in most other Places) are not to be seen there; of which amongst other Causes, these are assigned, *viz.* There is no Miser there, who hoards up what others should live upon; nor is there any wasteful Glutton or Epicure, who devours his own and other Folks Portion too. In short, all desirable Things are there in such Abundance, that every Man is as rich, as full, and as happy as he pleases.

*Bioph.* If all this was possible to be true, which I have not Faith enough to believe, yet the Felicity

city of this Country could not be long-liv'd ; for it will certainly derive upon itself the Envy of all its Neighbours ; and the Effect of that will be, that those who have the best Iron will quickly become Masters of this Wealth.

*Sebast.* NAY, *Biophilus*, as for that there is no Danger, for the Country is altogether inaccessible, save only by one narrow Way ; and that is so well guarded that to this Day no Enemy hath ever had the Confidence to assail it. And besides, all the Inhabitants are in such perfect Peace and Amity one with another, and maintain so inviolably their Allegiance towards their Sovereign, that as no Foreigner hath any Encouragement to Enterprize upon them by Treachery, so neither can he, without mighty Folly, think himself considerable enough to prevail by Force against such an united Strength.

*Bioph.* Now you speak of that, I pray give me leave to ask you one Question more : What is the Humour of the People, both amongst themselves, and towards Strangers ?

*Sebast.* THIS is admirable in its Kind, as any Thing I have told you yet. The People are sprightly and chearful, ingenious and complaisant, open-hearted and yet grave, without Fraud, and without Jealousy ; they neither intend any Hurt, nor do they suspect any. Amongst other Instances of their sedate Chearfulness, they are exceedingly addicted to Musick ; and their Songs are observed to be composed, for the most Part, in Praise of their Prince, the Splendor of his Court, the Glory of his Atchievements, and the Felicity of his Reign.

*Bioph.* It is all this was possible to be true, which I have not rich enough to believe, yet the Felicity

So

So far are they from Wrath and Choler, that in the Memory of Man there hath not been one Law-Suit commenced amongst them; and, which is more, not one Theological Disputation which usually are attended with so much Heat and Animosity in these Parts of the World. But as for Tale-bearers, Wisperers, Back-biters, and all that melancholy and envious Brood, there is not one of them to be found in all the Country; every Man there loves his Neighbour as himself, and is as tender of his Interest and Reputation as of his own.

AND then, for their Temper and Carriage towards Strangers, they are infinitely civil and obliging: They deride not other Mens Habit, or Mien, or Language, or Customs, or Complexion; but contrariwise whensoever any such come amongst them; they welcome them heartily, treat them with all Instances of Hospitality, and by all possible Obligations and Endearments invite them to become one People with themselves.

*Bioph.* THIS is a very strange Relation as ever I heard in my Life. But, in plain *English*, it is too good to be true. All this can amount to no more than to some *Utopia*, or new *Atlantis*. Pardon my Freedom, good *Sebastian*: I acknowledge you a wise and a learned Gentleman: But in this particular Story, some Body hath abused your good Nature; for it can be no better than a Fiction.

*Sebast.* You do do not ordinarily think a Man bound to Warrant the News he tells you, but you used to be contented to take it as he hath it; and I am sure you will not allow me to prescribe to you what you shall believe. However, I assure you, upon the Word of a Gentleman, and a Christian,



Christian, I have not devised it of my own Head, but am as well satisfied of the Truth of the Relation I have made to you, as it is possible for me to be of any Thing which I have not seen with my Eyes; and I am very confident I have as good Grounds for my Persuasion, as it is fit for a discreet Man to require in such a Case.

*Bioph.* I wish you could satisfy me as well: I pray therefore let us know what Probabilities you go upon in this Matter.

*Sebast.* I HAD this strange Relation (as you esteem it) from one that came from the Place, and was an Eye-witness of what He reported, and therefore could not be deceived Himself in what He related. And then, his Quality was such, as that He could have no Interest to impose upon me therein; for He was no less a Man than the only Son of the great Monarch of the Country; and He came as Ambassador Extraordinary from the King, his Father, on Purpose to invite and incline our People to participate of that happy Region, and of all the admirable Advantages aforesaid; and assured us, that all which came thould be free Denizons of *Urania*.

*Bioph.* Ay, good *Sebastian*, He told you so; but how are you sure He was not an Imposter, and designed to put Tricks upon you and our good-natured Countrymen?

*Sebast.* As for that his very Person and Mien spake for Him; both which were so august and grand, as that no mean Man could bear out the Port He used. Besides this, He came not in a clancular Way, but made his publick Entry; and his Train and Equipage was grave and majestick,  
like

like himself, far beyond the empty Pomp and Pageantry of a Counterfeit. His Commission and Letters credential also were publickly seen, read, and allowed; and they were sealed with such a Seal, as no Wit of Man could imitate or counterfeit.

ADD unto all this, I have seen the Map or Chart of the Country, I have perused the Digest of the Laws of the Kingdom, these Eyes have read the Records of their History, and with this Mouth I have tasted the delicious Fruits of the Land. What would you have more to justify the Matter of Fact?

*Bioph.* What would I have more! Why, I think you venture too great a Stock in one Bottom: I would not Trust to any one Man whatsoever he were, in' a Relation of this Nature; I should require to see and speak with many about it before I would believe it.

*Sebast.* You say well. But can you think it reasonable to require, that so great a Prince should send many Ambassadors on such an Errand, when He aims not at his own Greatness, or the accommodating of his own Affairs, nor hath any heed of our Alliance or Assistance; but merely designs our Benefit? Or can you expect that He should send every Day fresh Envoys; and that not only to whole Countries, but to every individual Person too? No, *Biophilus*, it was an Instance of wonderful Goodness, that such a Prince should send one Ambassador on such an Errand; and admirable Charity and Self-denial in Him that undertook and performed it.

*Bioph.* You speak Reason I must acknowledge, in that Particular. But yet I can never believe, that if there were any such Country as your Intelligence amounts to, it should lie undiscovered until now. What! *Drake, Cavendish, Columbus, Davis*,—none of them, in all their Travels, take Notice of such a Place; nor give the least Intimation of it until now.

*Sebast.* THAT is no such strange Thing as you make it; if you call to Mind how long a Time it was before the World would believe there were *Antipodes*, and yet it is plain that so long one full half of the World was unknown to the other. Or, if you remember, that Time was (and that not an ignorant Age neither) when the *Roman Empire* was thought to embrace the whole Earth, which, as now we are certain, took not in one fifth (perhaps not one tenth) of it. Do you not know that *Hercules's Pillars* were accounted the Boundaries of human Travels; and that, for a great many Ages, both the torrid and the frigid Zones (as they are called) were esteemed uninhabitable? Besides you know it is not very long since those vast Tracts of Land, the *West-Indies*, were first discovered. And, to say no more, I pray, how many Ages passed over the Heads of Mankind, before this our native Country of *Britain* (as considerable as it is) came into any Knowledge or Consideration with the rest of the World? Think it not strange therefore if *Urania* was so late discovered.

*Bioph.* But that which I principally intend to say, was this: You afford me Matter of great Wonder, that you should be so much concerned for a Place very newly discovered (if it be discovered;) but especially, that you should believe so many strange Things of it, before any one Person hath



hath gone from hence, and returned hither again, to confirm those Reports of it.

*Sebast.* I KNOW no Way to make a Man believe, that hath no Mind to it: Yet I will give you all the Satisfaction I am able. You must know therefore that this Country hath not been wholly undiscovered untill now, for I myself have seen a Book of great Authority and Antiquity, which, tho' somewhat obscurely and figuratively written, yet pointed at such a Place, and in some Measure described it too, to him that attentively read and considered it. And besides, there are credible Relations concerning certain Persons, that have made very fortunate Voyages thither.

BUT as to that you object, that no Man hath gone from hence thither, and returned again to us, to bring us the Tidings; you will easily satisfy yourself therein, if you consider what I intimated before, *viz.* That those who once get thither, can have no Inclinations to make a Change so much to their Disadvantage, as it must needs be for them to return hither again. Besides, tho' they say the Passage is not long thither, yet it is no common Road; and therefore very few will (at least unnecessarily) undertake it.

*Phil.* BUT if it be an untraced Path, how shall a Man find the Way thither, if he have a Mind to go.

*Sebast.* O *Philander*! There is no great Difficulty in that, if a Man be well resolved on the Business; for besides a Chart, and very punctual Instructions which the Ambassador left behind him for that Purpose when He was amongst us, there are skilful and faithful Guides and Pilots, who

freely offer their Service, and will not fail, with God's Blessing to land us safe there.

*Phil.* I CANNOT tell what *Biophilus* thinks of this Business; but for my Part, *Sebastian*, I am so ravished with your Relation, that if there be such a Place in the World, I will find it out, by God's Help. I thank GOD I am no Malecontent, either with my native Country, or my private Fortunes; yet I see no Reason we should, like Mushrooms, live and die upon the same Spot; especially if we may thus much mend ourselves by the Change. I am a Citizen of the World, and that shall be my Country where I can fare best.

BUT will you go with me, *Sebastian*? Then I shall not be only out of all Doubt of the Truth of your Narrative, but I shall with much more Chearfulness change my Country, when I do not change my Friend; nor forego your Company.

*Sebast.* BY God's Grace I will go with you; and to assure you of my Intentions, I will now acquaint you that I have been this good while setting Things in Order, and making Preparations for the Voyage.

*Phil.* BUT how shall we dispose of our Estates here? And what Commodities had we best to furnish ourselves with, to carry over with us?

*Sebast.* As for the Disposal of our present Fortunes there are very sure Returns betwixt this Country and that; for the Prince Himself will be your Security, if you put your Effects into such Hands as He hath appointed. But as for Merchandise to carry with us, there will be no Need of that; for the Country which we have in our  
Eye

Eye is so gloriously rich and plentiful, the Prince is so noble and benign, and all the Inhabitants so kind and charitable, that we shall be sure, as soon as ever we come there, to be furnished *gratis* with all that our Hearts can wish. And, moreover, if we should put ourselves to the Trouble of transporting our Baggage with us, it would not only incumber us in our Journey, but would also be such mere Trash and Lumber when you come there, that we should be ashamed of it, and ourselves too for setting such a Value upon it.

BUT there is another Thing, and much more material, which I must needs tell you of, in order to our more favourable Reception when we come there; that is, we must before hand quite alter our Habit and Garb and not so much as smell of the Earth we came from. Amongst other Things we must disuse ourselves from Onions and Garlick, and from Flesh too, that we may the easier accord with the Diet of the Country: And we must refine our Spirits, that we may be fit to breathe in that pure Air: And having so done, there needs no more but to carry with us great Minds and large Souls, to qualify us, both for the Society and Enjoyments there.

*Phil.* THANK you, dear Fellow-Traveller (for so I will henceforth style you) for these Instructions: I will use the best of my Endeavours to be fitted accordingly. But is there any Thing else that I need to be advised in?

*Sebast.* O, YES; there is one Thing more which I doubt you do not think of; and I am somewhat afraid lest the Mention of it should discourage you; but it must be, and there is no avoiding it.



*Phil.* IN the Name of GOD, what is it? Mistrust not my Courage or Constancy: I'll stick at nothing that crosses my Way to *Urania*.

*Sebast.* You remember I have intimated to you already, that when we come at the Country we design, we shall be immortal, we can never die afterwards; but we must die before-hand, or we shall never come thither. This is the Pinch of the Business: What think you of it now, *Philander*?

*Phil.* NEVER the worse for that Fellow-Traveler. But, good LORD! What a Dream have I been in all this while? I thought verily you had spoken historical Truth of some rare earthly Country: But now my Eyes are open, and I perceive you mean Heaven; that is the *Urania* you have all this while amused us with. Now I can unridle the whole Business: I have now a Clue to guide me through the Maze of your Discourse, and can decypher all the Figures you have used. I am sure it is Heaven only can answer the Character you have given: That is the Place where there is no Pain, Sickness, nor Death; there is no Night nor Darkness, but a perpetual Day; there is to be found the true Balsam that cures all the Distempers and Wounds, both of Body and Mind; there are to be had all the other Rarities which you have mentioned; *Jesus Christ* is the Ambassador from Almighty GOD, that invites us thither. All is plain and easy now. How dull was I, that I could not understand you sooner?

*Biaph.* AND have you drolled with us all this while, *Sebastian*? Have you wheedled me back again into the Subject I declined? Is your famous *Urania* in another World? I thought your News

was impossible to be true, and now you as good as confests it.

*Sebast.* By your Pardon, *Biophilus*, have I done you any Wrong? You asked for News, and I have told you good and true News; News of more Importance, and more comfortable than any the Coffee-house affords; a great Truth of a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, a Kingdom wherein there is Righteousness and Justice, Unity and Joy, Love and Good-Will; everlasting Peace and everlasting Life; a State of that Felicity, that it is able to make us weary of this World; and to render the Time of our Life tedious to us, till we come to the Enjoyment of it; in a Word, that is sufficient to make all the Ways of Virtue seem easy and delectable, and even Death itself desirable in the Way thither.

WHAT think you of it, *Philander*, now you understand what Country it is I persuaded you to? Doth your Mind hold for the Voyage? Will you go on with your Preparations for it, as we were discoursing before? Will you venture to shoot the Gulph, that you may arrive at it?

*Phil.* YES, Fellow-Traveller, I hold my Resolution. For tho' I find I was mistaken in the particular; yet not in the general; it was an earthly Paradise that I had in my Thoughts and I had no other Apprehensions of your Design; and therein *Biophilus* was more in the right than I, who was confident there could be no such Country in this World as you described. But I heartily thank you for the Deception; you have cheated us into our own Advantage. And now that I understand you, I do not change my Course, tho' I change my Port; I hope I shall not be so absurd,

urd, as to be more in earnest for an earthly Country than for an heavenly.

Who would not gladly be at everlasting Rest, and in an unchangeable Condition? We are *but Pilgrims and Strangers in this World*; but there we shall be at Home, and in our Father's House: Here we are continually tossed with Winds and Seas, tormented betwixt Hopes and Fears; there we come into Harbour, and shall be safe as upon a Rock, stable and settled as the Mountains.

Who can chuse but wish to live for ever, and would not be contented to die once, that he might be out of the Reach of Chance or Danger for ever after? Everlasting Life! What an Ocean of Joy and Felicity is contained in it! Surely he doth not love himself, or doth not understand himself, who would not gladly leave an uncertain, troublesome, quarrelsome, foolish, disputing, suspicious, envious World, upon far easier Terms than the Attainment of it. But to live with the ever blessed *Jesus*, to spend Eternity in the Society of good and wise, kind and peaceable Men, to enter into everlasting Friendships, inviolable Peace, unchangeable Felicity; I am transported with the Thoughts of it!

When once I had the Happiness to take Notice of a poor Man, blind from his Mother's Womb, who never had seen the Sun, nor could have any Notion of Beauty or Colours, nor of any of that Variety of delightful Objects which the Eye and Light entertain us with; when afterwards, (I say) by a strange Cure, this poor Man had his Eyes opened, and found a Crowd of new Delights press in upon him, he thought himself surrounded with Miracles, and was almost distracted with Wonder.

And



And certainly no less, but a great deal more will our Surprize be when we come to Heaven; where probably, we shall have new Powers opened which shall discover such Glories to us as we were not capable of perceiving before, if they had been presented to us: But most certainly we shall have then new Objects of Delight to entertain those Powers we have, and those transcendant to all we ever had Experience of before.

WHEN we shall come to Heaven, our spiritual *Canaan*, to the Enjoyment of an Happiness of GOD's preparing, who hath all the Ingredients of Felicity in his Power, and infinite Wisdom to contrive and compound them, and unspeakable Goodness to bestow them; and who, as the Scripture expresses it, hath, from the Beginning of the World been designing and preparing such a System of Joy and Felicity, as may at once both most delight his Creatures, and display all his Attributes: When (I say) we shall observe the strange Change between a narrow, stingy, necessitous, unquiet, sickly, peevish, and contentious World, which we have left behind us, and the Settlement and Peace, Plenty and Glory, of that we enter upon; it will not be easy for us (without larger Minds than we have now) to know how to behave ourselves; we shall be apt to be oppressed with Wonder, and, if it were possible, to die with Excess of Joy.

*Sebast.* You speak sensibly, dear *Philander*. You seem to have gone up to Mount *Neba*, and to have fed your Eyes with the Prospect of the Holy Land: But have you considered the Difficulties of the Way, as well as the Happiness of the Journey's End? Will you not, repent, and bethink of turning back when you encounter Difficulty or Danger?

ger? Will not Death affright you when it appears in all its dismal Pomp? Will you not shrink when you shall come to be stripped naked of all your worldly Habiliments? Will you not have a Lingring after your old Accomodations, your fine House, rich Furnitures, pleasant Garden, sprightly Wines, or any other Pleasures and Entertainments of the Body?

*Phil.* No, no, *Sebastian*, I will go to Heaven, whatever come of it. What can discourage a Man when Heaven is at Stake? If the Journey put me to a little Trouble, there is Rest at the End of it. What is it to exercise a little Patience, when a Man shall be crowned at last? Who would not run, strive, do, or suffer any Thing, and venture all upon such a Wager?

SHALL I be solicitous for my Estate and worldly Accomodations, when I know, whether I go to Heaven or no, I must shortly leave them all behind me? And surely if they cannot save me from Death, they ought not to hinder me of eternal Life.

OR shall I hanker after Onions and Garlick, and the Flesh-Pots of *Ægypt*, as you called the Pleasures of the Body, which will certainly forsake me, if I do not forsake them first? No, I have counted the Cost, there is nothing shall discourage me by the Grace of God; I will go to Heaven. But, I pray, let us not part Company; let us go to Heaven together,

*Sebast.* WITH all my Heart, dear Friend; for tho' I doubt we must not expect much Company with us, yet perfect Solitude is somewhat uncomfortable; and there are great Advantages of Society.

ty. For, if any Body should be so absurd as to laugh at us on our Journey, we can the better despise them. If either of us should happen to be heavy and weary in our Way, we may animate and quicken one another. If any Difficulty befall, that may be too hard for one of us, by our united Strength we may be able to encounter and remove it. If either of us should swerve a little out of the narrow Way, towards the Right-Hand, or towards the Left, the other may recall and rectify him. Besides, the great additional Comfort it will be when we come at our Journey's End, not only that we see one another happy, and enjoy one another's Society; but especially when we reflect upon the good Service we have done one another in bringing each other thither, we shall have our Joys re-doubled by the Reflection, and feel not only our own Shares, but that also of each other.

*Phil.* HAPPILY thought of, Fellow-Traveller, but will not *Biophilus* go with us too? What say you, Sir?

*Bioph.* You are honest Gentlemen, and my good Friends: But, what Romances do you make! what Castles do you build in the Air! and what Shadows do you feed yourselves withall! You talk of Heaven as confidently as if you had travelled an hundred Times through all the Regions of it; or rather, indeed, as if you had visited the World in the Moon. But when all is done, did ever you, or any Body else, see such a Place as Heaven? Leave these Enthusiastical Whimfies, and talk like Men: Speak of something that is certain and visible, and do not forego Substance for Shadows, Certainties for Uncertainties.

*Phil.*



*Phil.* GOD help you, good Neighbour, in Requital of the Caution you give us. Assure yourself, we have the same Senses, that you have; and only wish you had the same Faith that we have. We are not willing to part with Certainties for Uncertainties; for if Heaven be not certain, nothing else is. And as for the Things of this World, they are so far from it, that nothing is more certain than that we must part with them shortly whether we will or no. But as for the other World, we know whom we have believed.

*Biaph.* I TELL you all is but Dream and Fancy; there is no Proof in the World for it. All you have to say is, that Men must believe: As if you should say, shut your Eyes and see; you persuade a Man to find the Way to Heaven blindfold. No, give me good Proof, or I will not stir a Foot: With me Seeing is Believing.

*Phil.* REMEMBER yourself, good Neighbour: Are not you a Christian? Do you not believe that *Jesus Christ* came from Heaven on Purpose to shew us the Way thither? And did not He confirm his Report by undeniable Miracles? Besides, do you not see all wise Men provide for another World; and that generally good Men, when they come to die, are ravished with Joy in Contemplation of it, as if they really saw Heaven open to receive them?

*Biaph.* WHETHER or no I believe as much as you do, yet I believe this one Thing instead of all the rest, that we are born to be cheated. For, what with the Illusions of our own melancholy Fancies, what by the Prejudices of our Education, what by the Authority of unaccountable Tradition, and

and what by the Designs of Politicians, it is an hard Matter to know what else to believe.

*Phil.* INDEED, *Biophilus*, I am both sorry and ashamed to hear you talk at this Rate. And I do not wonder now, that you were so desirous to decline this Sort of Discourse when we fell upon it. You seem not only to reject Christianity, but all Religion in general; and upon those Terms you will be as little fit for this World, as for that which is to come.

FOR, what a sad Creature is a Man of no Religion at all? What State or civil Government will be able to endure him, whom no Oaths can fasten upon? How can there be any civil Society with him, that can neither trust, nor be trusted? What Security can such a Man give, that he shall not disturb the State, violate the Person of his Prince, falsify his Trust, betray his Friend, cut his Neighbour's Throat, if he be under the Awe of no God, the Expectation of no Rewards nor Punishments in another World? What Security can there be, I say, in dealing with such a Man, what Sincerity in his Friendship, what Safety in his Neighbourhood? For all these depend upon the Reverence of Religion, which he that is wholly destitute of, must needs be a Wolf's Head, the Pest and Vermin of human Society.

Do not therefore, dear *Biophilus*, at once both stiffle your own Conscience, and affront the common Sense and Reason of Mankind. Do not, under the Pretence of being more witty than other Men, reason yourself into Brutality; and whilst you grow over-wise in your own Eyes, be the most fatally mistaken, and lost for ever.

LET not the Opinion you have, that other Men are under Prejudices, prejudice you against Arguments for believing. Come, deal ingenuously, and open your Breast, propound the Grounds of your Suspicions, the Objections you have against Religion; and tho' I cannot promise you that I will answer them all to your Satisfaction, yet I doubt not but there is one that will.

*Bioph.* Look you, Gentlemen, you put me into a great Strait, for if I do not disclose my Mind to you, I shall seem disingenuous; and, on the other Side, if I do discover my Sentiments, it is probable that my Creed will fall so many Articles short of yours, that we shall break into some Heats, and endanger the Continuance of our neighbourly Conversation. However, since it seems to be your Desire, I will be plain with you.

Now, in the first Place, that you may not think me a perfect Sceptick, I declare to you that I acknowledge the Being of a God; and that not only because the Generality of Mankind, and even *Epicurus* himself owned so much, but because it is not conceivable how the World should be without one; for no Wit or Reason of Man can evince to me, how any Thing should begin to be, without some necessary and eternal Existent, to begin the Motion, and to bring it into Being; or, which is the same Thing in Effect, there can be no second Cause if there be no first.

BUT then, beyond this, you must pardon me; for, to deal sincerely with you, I do not think that this God minds or troubles Himself about the World after He had made it: Much less do I see any sufficient Ground for that which *Philander* hath been talking so warmly about; namely, a World



to come. And for eternal Life, (which Men speak such great Things of) I profess I look upon it as a flat Impossibility; forasmuch as I see Men die, but see no Foundation for a Belief, that there is any Life or Existence out of a Body.

THERE are some other Points, that I withhold my Assent from; but because you have challenged me to a rational Debate, therefore, to put the Business between us to an Issue, I will insist but upon one Point, and that shall be the same which we fell into by Chance at our first coming together; namely, whether there be such a Thing as a general Judgment, where Men's Actions shall be reviewed and censured after this Life. Prove me but this one Point sufficiently, and I will grant you all the rest.

*Sebast.* WHAT Proof do you require of this? Why should not the Testimony of the Holy Scripture satisfy you.

*Bioph.* EXCUSE me there, *Sebastian*; I am not to be born down by Authority, but convinced by Reason. If you will do any Good upon me, you must deal with me as a Philosopher, not a bigotted Person.

*Sebast.* BY your Favour, it is not to impose upon you to give you Divine Authority for Proof. I hope GOD may be believed upon his own Word, especially in a Business of this Nature, which depends so much upon the Determination of his Will: For who can tell GOD's Mind better than Himself. *Who knows the Mind of Man, but the Spirit of a Man which is in him?* And who can pretend to declare what GOD will do, unless He be pleased to reveal his Intentions? But if He declare

He will judge the World, we may be sure it shall be done.

*Bro'h.* Ay, but that is the Question. How shall I be assured that God hath any such Intentions, or hath made any such Declaration?

*Sebast.* THAT which we call by the Name of Holy Scripture, is nothing else but a Collection of such Declarations of the Mind of the Divine Majesty, as He hath thought fit, from Time to Time, to make to the Sons of Men. And those Books which are so called, have been revered by wise Men in all Ages upon that Account, as such: All imaginable Care hath been taken to preserve them from Corruption or Depravation; and several of the best of Men have exposed their Lives, rather than consent to the Destruction of them. Now, why should you call in Question the Authority of these Books, which you cannot do without impeaching the Wisdom of the most able, and the Sincerity of the most honest of Men; and upon the same Terms you derogate from the Faith of all Mankind, and must (if you will be impartial) abrogate the Credit of all the old Records in the World. Forasmuch as (besides all other Considerations) these sacred Records, I mean the Books of the Old and New Testament, bear an irrefragable Testimony to each other; and, as a Pair of Indentures, justify one another. Which you will easily be convinced of, if you consider, that these two Volumes were written in several very remote Ages, and consequently by Persons that could hold no Correspondence one with another; and were in the Custody of those that were of such contrary Interests and Opinions, that it was impossible they either would or could conspire together to put a Cheat upon the World in them. Now if, notwithstanding

ing these two Books (in the Circumstances afore-said) shall verify one another, so as that whatsoever the Old Testament promises, the New Testament performs; what the one foretold, the other represents the Accomplishment of; what Ground is, or can there be, to suspect the Truth of them? For if several Witnesses, and those of several Countries, and of contrary Interests, such as never saw the Faces of one another before, and therefore neither would nor could combine together and contrive their Story, and especially being examined apart too, shall notwithstanding jump in the same Matter of Fact, and Circumstances also, there is no Man so abounding in his own Sense, but will allow their Evidence to be good and substantial; then much more is there very good Ground to believe those Books which have all these Advantages, and several other which I will insist upon.

*Bioph.* THESE are pretty Things which you say; but this is not that Kind of Proof I expected from you. If this be all the Satisfaction you can give me, I am where I was.

*Sebast.* No, *Biophilus*, this is not all I have to say; but I thought fit to remonstrate to you the Sufficiency of this Kind of Proof in itself, which Men of your Way are apt to make so slight of; and thence to convince you, that those Men that take up with this alone, are not so soft and credulous People, as you are wont to represent them.

BUT what if I had no other Proof but this, I do not find that you are able to reply any Thing to it. Besides, if this Way of Probation were far less considerable than it is, yet you know any Evidence will serve against none; and the meanest Arguments will carry a Cause, when there is nothing to be



said on the other Side. If you could but pretend to prove, on your Part, that there were no such Thing as a Judgment to come, you had then some Reason to be strict in your Demands of Proof from me, of what I assert: But in a true Balance the least Grain will cast the Scale when there is nothing against it.

Now, besides the unequal Balance of nothing against something, be it never so small, do but consider what strange Imprudence it is to adventure so great a Stake, as all your Interest in another World amounts to, upon a mere *Non putaram*. For, what if such a Thing should happen to prove true at last, what will become of you then?

Wise Men are wont to value, not only Certainties, but also Probabilities, and even Contingencies also. Now, seeing it is not impossible but such a Thing may be, and it is of infinite Consequence if it should be, there is all the Wisdom in the World to be provided for it. You will say, it may not be: But that is all that Infidelity itself can enable you to say: And then sure it is far safer to suppose that it may be, for no Hurt can come of that; but the Danger is unspeakable on the other Side, if it should prove to be true. In a Word, in such a Case as this is, it is a wise Man's Part rather to believe upon slight Evidence, than to disbelieve upon great Presumptions.

*Bioph.* I AM beholden to you for the friendly Caution you give me: But it is your Reasons I expect at this Time, and not your Advice.

*Sebast.* THOSE you shall have presently; and do not think I decline the Proof I promised, because I proceed thus gradually with you: The true Reason whereof

whereof is, because I would rather your own Prudence should incline you to believe, than that my Arguments should press you to it; and I much more desire that you should be safe, than that I should have the Glory of a Victory. It is only your Concern that we go upon; have therefore a little Patience, that we may rightly understand one another, and since you have refused Scripture-Proof, give me Leave to ask you particularly, what Kind of Proof you expect of this Matter under our Consideration.

IN the first Place, I hope you do not require sensible Evidence of a Day of Judgment. You were saying even now, that no Man had seen Heaven, and therefore you did not believe it. Possibly, those Words slipped from you unadvisedly. However, it is (you know) a Thing future which we are now debating about; and sensible Proof cannot be required of that, without flat Contradiction. It is as if a Man should desire to see that which confessedly is not to be seen; and that a Thing should be that is not, or be and not be at the same Time. You know you cannot have sensible Evidence To-day, that the Sun will rise To-morrow: In short, neither of any Thing past, nor future; but only of that which is present.

*Bioph.* WELL, we are agreed for that. I did, I confess, speak of seeing Heaven, but there was no Contradiction in that; because if there be any such Place, it is supposed to be constantly existent, and therefore may be visible: Yet I do not expect to see the Judgment 'till the Time comes; because Futures are not to be seen, but foreseen. Go on therefore, and give me rational Evidence, and it shall suffice.

*Seckst.*

*Sebast.* BUT there is another Thing I desire to be resolv'd of, namely, What Measure or Degree of rational Evidence you will be satisfied with? The Reason of my Enquiry is this: Some Men there are, who pretend to a Readiness to believe upon just Grounds; but when it comes to Trial, they are humourfome and captious; they will require such Evidence as the Nature of the Thing cannot admit of, (even supposing it to be true;) they expect such Proof as shall leave no Room for Cavil and Exception, such as a Man can find no Evasion from. Now I must tell you, this is very hard and unreasonable in any Case whatsoever; forasmuch as the Wit of Man is fitter to pull down, than to build up; and it is the easiest Thing in the World to find Shifts and Cavils; insomuch that he must believe very little indeed, that will admit of nothing which some slight Objection or other may be made against.

THEREFORE all that you can justly expect in the present Case, is, that there be sufficient Ground given you for a discreet Choice; and Over-weight enough in one Scale to incline the Judgment of a prudent Man so far, that he shall see it more reasonable that he believe, than that he do not. This is the just Standard of Prudence, and this is the Principle that wise Men govern themselves by in weighty Affairs. And, indeed, if no Man should determine himself to the Pursuit of a Business, untill there were no Objection, no Excuse, Colour, or Pretence to the contrary, all the noblest Projections, and most necessary Undertakings of Mankind, would be nipped and blasted in the Bud.

*Bioph.* IN Truth, I do not see but your Demand is reasonable; and I must yield to you in this Particular also.

*Sebast.*



*Sebast.* THEN I ask no more.

*Phil.* YES, *Sebastian*, let me put you in Mind of one Thing more; which is, that *Biophilus* will promise you to hold the Scales even; otherwise, an Over-weight in either of them will not be discernible. My Meaning is, that he agree to be sincerely indifferent; and willing to believe on the one Side, as well as the other: For I have found by my own Experience, that whilst a Man retains a partial Fondness for an Opinion, it is not all the Arguments in the World shall beat him out of it; he will see all that which makes for him as through a Magnifying-Glass; and all that which is against him, shall seem little and despicable. But when a Man comes to this Pass, that he is content one Side should be true as well as the other, then (and not 'till then) the best Reason will carry it. Therefore unless you premise this, you will strive against the Stream, and dispute in vain.

*Sebast.* THANK you heartily for that, *Philander*. It is very true, *Biophilus*, that if you oppose Prejudice against the Discourse I am to make to you, that will be Armour of Proof against all the Arguments that can be brought; and then we had as good stay here, as go farther and lose our Labour.

BUT why should you not lean as far towards the Doctrine which I am asserting, as towards the contrary? Nay, why should you not look upon it as greatly your Interest, that there should be another World, and a Judgment at the End of this? It is certain, you and all of us must die, there is no peradventure in that; and it were a most dismal Thing to think of it, if Death put an utter End to a Man, so that all his Comforts, and all his Hopes expire with him. And I wonder, in my Heart,  
how

how any Man can think of Death with any Patience upon those Terms; and that it doth not make him sullen and melancholy all the Days of his Life. You will say, he must yield to Necessity: But that is a Remedy worse than the Disease, (if it be possible) to seek a Cure for Death in Desperation. To tell me there is a Necessity of dying, is only to tell me there is no Help in the Case; which is the very Thing I complain of.

AND this Consideration is so much the more sharp and cutting, by how much the more Man's Life hath been pleasant and comfortable. As for a Man that hath all his Life-Time been oppressed with Calamities, pinched with Poverty, covered with Obloquy, or afflicted with Pain, it may seem easy to him to die, that so he might have that Rest in the Grave, which he could not have above Ground. But for him that hath had good Treatment in the World, pleasant Accommodation, tempting Fortunes and Enjoyments; for such a Man to think of Death, which will spoil him of all his Ornaments, and level him with the Dust; that will interrupt all his Delights, put an End to all his Designs, and draw a dark Veil over all his Glories: I say, if such a Man hath nothing to comfort him against Death, if there be no Life after this, but a Man must for ever forsake, and be forsaken of all his Felicities, I cannot see how he can possibly avoid an unspeakable Abhorrence of it. Nay, that is not all; for, methinks it should render all his present Enjoyments, not only insipid and loathsome, but even a Torment to him.

Now, why should any Man resist the only Remedy in this Case, against the Sum of all Calamities; which is, the Hopes of another Life? Why should he be willing to die as the Beast dies, and

to abandon himself to the Grave, to Rottenness, and Oblivion? It were certainly better never to have been born, than both to live in perpetual Fear of dying, and being dead, to be as if a Man had never lived: Better never to have tasted the Sweets of Life, than to be only tantalized; and by that Time he begins to live, to begin to die; and then be eternally deprived of what he just had a Sight of.

NAY, farther yet; if a Man had lived only like a Beast, it had been no great Matter to die like a Beast: If, I say, a Man looked no farther than his Fodder, had no Sense of any Thing but Eating and Drinking, and had a Soul in him, that served only for Salt to keep the Body from Putrefaction, so that he never looked about him, made no Improvement of himself, and had no Designs in his Head, it were less Matter if he returned to the Earth, which (like a Mole) he did nothing but root in and turn over, whilst he was upon it. But for a Man of an active Soul, of improved Parts, of Reason, and Wisdom, and Usefulness, to be smothered in the Grave; so that all his Notions and Discoveries, all his Arts and Sciences; nay, all his Virtues, all his Hopes and Designs shall be abruptly broken off, and buried in Oblivion; this is so sad a Thing, that it is able to discourage all Study and Industry, all Care and Culture of a Man's Life: For, why should I strive to live like a Man, if I must die like a Beast? Why should I take Pains to know, when *by increasing Knowledge, I should but increase my Sorrow?* Forasmuch as the more I know, the more I shall feel myself miserable; and, indeed, become guilty of my own Torment. So that if there were no Hopes after this present Life, it would be a more adviseable Course for a Man to abandon himself to the most dark and squalid Barbarism, than to wear out himself in the Quest of Knowledge; and better  
never



never to apply himself to any Study, or to bestow any Pains or Cost upon himself; nay, indeed, if it were possible, it were desirable never to know any Thing, or to think at all. For, why should a Man put a Cheat upon himself? Why should he take, not only unprofitable, but vexatious Pains? In a Word, why should he not so live, as he must die? To all which add, that if there were indeed no other World, and if there be any Man that can find in his Heart to be fond of living upon these Terms, he must of Necessity be a pitiable Slave whilst he continues here: The perpetual Fears of Death cramping him, and keeping him in continual Bondage, that he shall not have the Spirit or Courage to dare to do any brave Action; but contrariwise, he will be unavoidably tempted to be a wretched Coward, and base Fellow; and become a sordid Parasite, to flatter and humour every Body, merely upon the Account of Self-preservation.

WHY therefore should any Man be fond of such an uncomfortable, nay, such a sottish and debasing Opinion? Why should not a Man rather hope well of himself, by cherishing an Expectation that he may survive his Body, and live eternally?

*Bioph.* THERE is no Question, *Sebastian*, but that living for ever is very desirable, if a Man could hope for such a Thing absolutely, and not clogged with Conditions. As for Death itself, that would have no great Matter of Formidableness in it, if it be (as I suppose it) a perfect Intercision of all Sense; much less, if it were (as the Men of your Persuasion use to speak) only a dark Passage to another Life. But the Mischief is, that upon your Hypothesis a Judgment must pass upon a Man first, before he can arrive at that other Life. Now that is the terrible Thing; if I were rid of the Danger of that,

it

it would (as you say well) be my Interest to believe all the rest, in Spite of all Objections to the contrary.

*Sebast.* I do not design to impose upon you; for it is very true, there is no Passage into the other World, without undergoing a Test or Trial, whether we be fit for eternal Life, or no. And it is most certain also, that if a Man die an impious, a base and wicked Person, it were better for him that either he had not been born, or else that the Grave might cover him to all Eternity. But what need this fright any Man whilst he is alive, and may provide himself accordingly? Especially since the Grace of God puts it in our Power to be so qualified, that we may be out of all Danger of miscarrying in the Judgment.

FOR, *Biophilus*, can it be thought that Almighty God should seek the Ruin of his Creatures? Or that He can have any Design upon them, to make them eternally miserable? If He had, there would not be the Solemnities of a Day of Judgment; for He not need to ensnare us in the Forms of Law, but might, without more ado, have destroyed us when He pleased; and who could resist Him, or dispute the Case with Him? Undoubtedly, He is too great a Majesty to have any little Ends to serve, and therefore we can suspect no Hurt from Him; and there could be nothing but the Overflowings of his own Goodness, that provoked Him to make us at the first; and therefore there can be nothing of Envy, Malignity, or Cruelty in any of his Counsels and Designs about us.

AND that all these are not mere Conjectures of mine, but real Truth, (besides all other Ways of Probation) you may be assured by this Consideration;

tion; that in all God's Demands from us, as the Terms and Conditions of our Happiness; or (which is all one, in all the Duties He requires at our Hands, and in all the Obligations of Religion) there is nothing severe and discouraging, much less impossible. Such is his Wisdom and Benignity, that He can impose nothing as a severe Task-Master, purely to abridge our Liberty, or to break our Spirits; but only to raise and improve us, according to our utmost Capacities, and as necessary Methods to train us up for eternal Life.

WHY then should a Man think so ill of God, as to be afraid or unwilling to fall into his Hands? You cannot forebode any Evil from Him, if you are satisfied that He is perfect and happy, full and glorious, just and good; and therefore you must condemn yourself of prodigious Folly in not complying with reasonable and equitable Laws, and of being wilfully accessory to your own Calamity, if you dare not undergo his Judgment. So that upon the whole Matter, there can be no Reason why you should be unwilling to believe there is such a Thing: And that is all I desire of you at present, and I heartily conjure you to be true to yourself herein.

*Bioph.* WELL, I am resolved to be as indifferent as it is possible to be: Now therefore prove it.

*Sebast.* THAT I will do with all possible Plainness and Sincerity; namely, I will make good that there is sufficient Reason to incline a prudent Man to believe, that after this Life God will call Men to Account, and judge them according to their former Actions.

Now you know it is the Nature of moral Arguments, not to depend upon one single Evidence, but



but to consist of the united Force of several Considerations. Accordingly, my present Proof of a Judgment to come, must comprise these three Particulars.

*First*, I WILL shew, that the Nature and Condition of Mankind is such, as to render him fit and capable to come to an Account, and to undergo such a Judgment as we speak of.

*Secondly*, THAT it is very agreeable to the Nature and Attributes of GOD, that He should call Mankind to such an Account.

*Thirdly*, THAT GOD actually exercises such a Providence in this present World, as gives Earnest before-hand, that He really intends to judge it hereafter.

THESE three Things make Way for each other, and all together amount to a full Proof of the Point in Hand. Wherefore, when I have opened them severally, in the Order I have lain them down, I will leave it to you to collect the Result of them.

*First*, I SAY, the Nature and Condition of Mankind is such, as renders him capable of undergoing a Judgment in another World; and therefore it is reasonable that he expect it accordingly. This will appear by the Instances following.

In the first Place, it is notorious, that Mankind is endued with a large and comprehensive Mind, which is not confined to the mere Objects of his Senses, and Things present before him; but hath a vast Scope and Prospect, by Means of which, he surveys the Universe, embraces the whole World, and takes within his Verge, as well Things past and

Things to come, as those that are present; which no other Creature is capable of but himself. The Beast hath no Kind of Notice of, or Concern for what was in former Time, no Solitude about what may come after; but only applies itself to the present Exigencies or Conveniences of the Body. But Man is very curious, and inquisitive into History, and how Things passed of old long before he was born; and is also very thoughtful and anxious what may befall hereafter, when he shall be dead and gone. Now, this one Consideration alone makes him look, as if he were a Being that were concerned in the whole Frame of Nature, and in all the Revolutions of Providence, and, at least, of more Consequence than to be a mere Pageant for the short Time of this Life: Or as a Mushroom to shoot out of the Earth, and return to it again, and so be as if it had never been.

BESIDES, we may observe, that the Mind of Man doth not only consider the absolute Nature of Things, as they lie singly and severally before it; but compares them together, and estimates their relative Natures, the mutual Respects that they have to each other, and the various Influences they have upon each other, and so comparing Things together, raises Observations, makes Inferences, deduces Conclusions, frames general Maxims; thereby brings Things into Order and Method, and raises Arts and Sciences. All, or any of which Things no Creature below himself makes any Pretence to, or gives any Tokens of. From whence we may conclude, not only the Pre-eminence of Nature, but that he is ordained to higher Purposes.

MOREOVER, Mankind is endowed with Liberty of Choice, by Virtue of which, he doth not only move himself by his own internal Principles, and  
vital

vital Energy ; but also can determine himself to this Object, or that ; and either resume or desist the Prosecution at his own Pleasure. Insomuch that he is neither carried by the Swing of any superior Causes, nor fatally allured by the powerful Charms of any Objects from without ; no nor by the Efficacy of any Arguments arising therefrom ; nor any Impression whatsoever (saving that of GOD) can overbear or supersede his own Resolution, but that he can act or desist, suspend Prosecution, or pursue his own Choice ; and apply himself to this Object, or that ; and follow this Argument and Motive, or the other : He hath such an Helm within himself, that he can sail against Wind and Tide ; he can move himself in a Calm, and stay himself in a Storm : In a Word he can move which Way, when, and how far he will. The Truth of this we find by daily Experience ; and we commonly please ourselves too much in this Prerogative of our Natures. We see that which is better, and follow that which we know to be worse : We hear Arguments, and reject them ; because we will do so, we are persuaded to the contrary, and yet go on ; and when and whatsoever we act, we find at the same Time we could have done quite contrary if we had pleased. Other Creatures either act merely as they are acted by superior Causes, or fatally inclined by the Objects and Motives before them : But we are put into the Hand of our own Counsels, as to our inward Resolutions and Determinations. Now this, as it is a mighty Discrimination of our Natures from theirs, so it hath this peculiar Effect, that it renders a Man's Actions properly his own, and consequently fits him to undergo a Judgment for them.



BUT farther yet : To make Mankind more capable of a Judgment, he hath a directive Rule, or Law within him, whereby to govern himself, he acts not only freely in Respect of any Cause without himself; but hath a Light within, to guide those free Powers of his, by the Means of which he is enabled both to make Choice of his Designs, and to select fit Methods of accomplishing them. For as he is not staked down to some one particular Business, (as generally other Creatures are) but hath great Scope to expatiate in, and Variety to please himself withall; so he hath a Card and Compass given him to sail by in that vast Ocean which lies before him : He hath a Faculty of discerning the Difference of Things; and consequently can judge what is worthy to be pursued, and also to measure and adjust the Means thereunto; which renders him more fit to give an Account.

NAY, farther yet, human Nature by the Advantage of this Light within him, hath not only a Capacity of apprehending and judging of natural Good and Evil, or such Things as are pleasant and profitable, or the contrary; but hath also Notions of higher Good and Evil, which we commonly call moral; that is, he finds himself obliged to have Regard to something besides, and better than his Body; namely, either to the Deity, or to the Community of Mankind; or, at least to his own better Part, his Soul. None of which are at all consider'd by any Creatures below Man: And there is hardly any Part of Mankind, (at least, that deserve to be so esteem'd) which doth not think itself concerned in all these. For we see, whosoever hath any Thing of a Man in him doth think some Actions to become, or not become him, merely as he is a Man, which would admit

admit of no Difference, but be all alike in a Beast. Whereupon it is, that a Man cannot dispense with himself in the doing of several Things which are in his Power to do; no, not in the Dark, and the greatest Privacy; because every Man that in any Measure understands himself, hath a Reverence of himself; and the Effect of this betrays itself in that quick Sense which Mankind hath peculiarly of Shame and Honour: Which argues him to be accountable to something higher than his Senses.

ABOVE all this, it is considerable, that Mankind has not only a speculative Apprehension of moral Good and Evil, but a practical and very quick Sense of it, which we call Conscience; by which he not only remembers and calls to Mind whatsoever hath passed him, but reflecting also upon the Ends and Circumstances of his own Actions, and comparing what he hath done, both for Matter and Manner, either with the Rule of Reason within him, or some other Law, he judges himself accordingly. If he hath done well, he then applauds and comforts himself, and feels Satisfaction in his own Mind. As for Example, If a Man hath behaved himself gallantly towards his Prince and Country; if he hath carried himself gratefully towards his Friends, his Patrons, or Benefactors; if he hath been beneficent to any Part of Mankind; if he hath demonstrated love to God, or Goodness, and good Men; if he has restrained his own Rage and Passions; if he has rescued an Innocent from the Hand of the Oppressor, or done any Thing of like Nature, the Heart of every Man in such a Case, feels such an inward Delight as sweetens his Spirits, and cheers his very Countenance. On the contrary, if he has been false, treacherous and ungrateful; if he has been cruel and oppressive,

or

or has said or done any base Thing, he is presently upbraided, accused, condemned and tormented by himself. Now, what is all this but a Kind of Anticipation of the Judgment to come?

To all which add in the last Place, that the Mind of Man seems plainly to be above the Body, and independent of it; forasmuch as we see, that not only our Reason, and the Powers of our Souls, are so far from decaying with the Body, that contrariwise, they grow more strong and vigorous by those very Causes which impair the Body; I mean, by Age, Exercise and Experience. Besides, it is easily observable, that our Souls as often as they please, act quite contrary to the Inclinations of our Bodies, and frequently controul the Passions thereof, as well as over-rule the Verdict of our Senses: Therefore it is not at all probable that they should perish with our Bodies, but survive to some farther Purposes; especially if we take in what I intimated before, namely, the Consideration of the Shortness of Life; which is so inconsiderable for so excellent a Being as the Soul to display itself in, that it seems unworthy of all the aforesaid Perfections, and more unworthy of the Contrivance of that Wisdom which made us, to order it so; unless it be, that Mankind is placed here in a State of Probation, and is to be tried hereafter, in order to a more lasting Duration. Which, in Consideration of all the Premises, he cannot but be thought capable of; at least if there be a Judge as fit to judge him, as he is fit to undergo a Judgment. Which brings me to my second Branch.

*Bioph.* HOLD a little, I pray, good *Sebastian*: You have spoken many Things well of the Pre-eminence



eminence of human Nature ; and some of them such as are not only sufficient to erect a Man's Spirits, and to provoke him to hope well of himself ; but also to render it in some Sort probable, that we are designed for some higher Uses than we commonly apply ourselves to. Nevertheless, you have not reached your Point, nor will all you have said attain the End you propounded, unless you go farther, and prove the Soul of Man to be a Spirit, or Immaterial Substance, (as the Men of your *Way* are wont to speak,) that so there may be a plain Foundation for its Existence out of the Body. Without which, let it be as excellent a Being as it can, and adorned with as many other Perfections as you can imagine, it cannot be capable of standing at a Tribunal, and undergoing such a Judgment as we are speaking of.

*Sebast.* I COULD have wished you would have given me Leave to lay all the Parts of my Argument together before you, that so you might have taken a View of it entire, and all at once ; and then you might have objected as you should have seen Cause. But however, I will comply with your Method : And as to that which you have thought fit now to interpose, I answer these two Things.

*First*, I SAY, it is not necessary to the Business in Hand, that the Soul be proved to be strictly immaterial, and capable of existing and acting out of the Body ; forasmuch as at the Day of Judgment I suppose the Body shall be raised again : And then, if it should be so, that all the Powers of the Soul were laid asleep by Death, until that Time ; yet upon a Reunion with their proper Organs, they would revive again. So that I  
did

did not, in my Proof, fall short of the Mark I aimed at; but you out-shoot the Point in your Demand: For, whether the Soul be a Spiritual Substance or no, so long as those Perfections which we have enumerated belong to it, there is nothing wanting to make it capable of undergoing a Judgment. But,

Secondly, To speak my own Mind plainly, and to come home to your Satisfaction, I must tell you, that as for my Part, I do not doubt but that the Soul of Man is, properly and strictly, a spiritual Nature; so I am confident that those Things which we have ascribed to it, sufficiently prove it to be so; seeing it is impossible to save those *Phænomena*, or to give any tolerable Account of those great *Accomplishments* and *Performances* of the Soul before specified from mere Matter, let it be modified how it can.

SIMPLE Perception of Objects is the lowest of human Perfections; and, indeed, is not proper to human Nature, but common to Brutes; yet this seems impossible to be perform'd by mere Matter. For the Eye, tho' it be a very admirable Organ, can by no Means be said to perceive the Objects of Sight, but only to transmit or present them to some perceptive Power: It doth, I say, only as a Glass, represent the Image of the Thing; which even a dead Eye, or an Hole, will in some Measure perform; but it makes no Judgment of the Object at all, as appears by this, that all Objects are transmitted, reversed, or with the Heels upward, thro' the Eye, and so left, 'till some higher Powers set them right, and judge of their Distance, and other Circumstances.

Now

Now, if it be so, that Matter thus advantageously disposed, as in the admirable Structure of the Eye, cannot perform that one Act of simple Perception, what shall become of all those nobler Actions of the Soul; and into what shall they be resolved? Such as Self-motion, the strange Celerity of Thought, Memory of that which is past, Prudence and Fore-cast for that which is to come, and a thousand other strange Operations. Is it imaginable that mere Matter should understand, argue, dispute, and consider the Relation of one Thing to another; and thence infer Consequences, and make Conclusions? Is it likely that mere Body and Quantity should be sensible of Shame and Honour: Nay, be conscientious too, and accuse, condemn and torture itself; or which is most wonderful of all, check, controul, deny, limit and mortify itself? He that will undertake to shew how these Things may be performed by Atoms and Motion only, is a subtle Mechanist indeed; and I do not doubt but, at the same rate, such a Man may be able to make a new World when he pleases, with the same Atoms or Materials. For it is evident there is more Intricacy in this little World of Man, than in the whole Fabrick of Heaven and Earth besides.

WHEREFORE, if Matter or Body cannot perform the aforesaid Operations, then the Soul of Man must be a spiritual Substance.

*Bioph.* I CANNOT understand what you mean by this Thing which you call Spirit; and therefore I reject the Notion as Gibberish and Nonsense.

*Sebast.* SOFTLY, *Biophilus*: What Reason is there for that hasty Conclusion? Must we deny every



every such Thing to be, as is hard to understand? Must we, like dull Boys, tear out the Lesson that is difficult to learn? But besides, let me tell you, there is not more Difficulty in understanding the Nature of Spirits, than there is in conceiving how all the aforefaid Operations should be performed without them; no, nor half so much neither: So that nothing is gotten by the Objection; for it is a vain Thing to object Difficulty, when at the same Time you are forced to acknowledge the Thing to be necessary. But why, I pray you; is not spiritual Substance as intelligible as corporeal?

*Bioph.* O SIR, there is a vast Difference in the Case: I can see and feel the latter, but I cannot the former.

*Sebast.* NAY, believe me, there you are out: You see and feel only the Accidents of a bodily Substance, but not the Substance itself, no more than you see or feel a Spirit.

*Bioph.* PARDON me, at least, I see and feel the bodily Substance by the Accidents; that is, I am assured of its Presence and Existence, and I can affirm such Things of it upon that Testimony of Senses.

*Sebast.* AND you may affirm as much of a Soul (if you please) tho' you can neither see nor feel it; forasmuch as you plainly perceive the Properties and Operations of it.

*Bioph.* THAT is close, and to the Purpose, I confess; but still I cannot tell what to make of this Thing called Spirit, for I can frame no Image

of it in my Imagination, as I can do of other Things.

*Sebast.* WHY there it is now ; I perceive you have a Desire to see with your Mouth, and hear with your Eyes. For, as reasonably every Jot may you expect to do either of those, as to frame a sensible Imagination of a Spirit. That which we call Imagination, (you know) is nothing else but the Impress of the Colour, Bigness, or some other Accidents (of a Thing that hath been represented to our Senses) retained in our Fancy. But now, if a Spirit have no Colour nor Bulk, nor such other Accidents to be represented to our Fancy, thro' our outward Senses, how is it possible you should have any Image of it there? Spiritual Beings are only capable of affording us an intellectual Idea ; namely, our higher Faculty of Reason, from Observation of their Effects and Operations, concludes their Essence, and takes an Estimate of their Nature : And, indeed, it is a Contradiction to require any other Evidence of that Kind of Beings.

*Bioph.* THIS Kind of Discourse is very subtle, and I cannot tell what to object farther to it : Go on therefore to your second Branch ; perhaps there I may better cope with you.

*Sebast.* THE second Step which I take towards the Proof of the Judgment to come, is, that as on the one Side, Mankind appears to be fit and capable of being judged hereafter ; so on the other Hand, it is agreeable to the Nature and Attributes of GOD, and to those Notions we have of a Deity, that He should call the World to such an Account. And this appears briefly thus :

THE most common and most natural Notion which Men have of the Divine Majesty, is, that He is a Being absolutely perfect; that is, (amongst other Accomplishments) that He is a most powerful, wise, just, and good Being: There is hardly any Body that thinks of a God, but considers Him under these Perfections; and he that divests Him of any of these Perfections, renders Him neither an Object of Fear, nor of Love, and consequently not a God.

Now, if these Things be included in the very Notion of God, they not only capacitate Him to judge the World, if He pleases; but give great Assurance that He will do it. For, if He be a wise Being, He cannot but see how Things go; and particularly how his Creatures carry themselves here below. If He be powerful, He hath it in his Hand to rectify those Disorders He observes amongst them; and both to punish the Evil, and to reward the Good. And if He be good and just, it cannot but be expected from Him, that He will set Things to Rights one Time or other, when His Wisdom shall think fit. But it is evident, this is not done in this World; therefore there is no Reason to doubt, but He will assuredly do it in another World: And therefore the Scripture tells us, *He hath appointed a Day wherein He will judge the World in Righteousness.*

*Bioph.* NOT too fast, good *Sebastian*. I know not certainly what Apprehensions other Men may have; but for my Part, though I do acknowledge a God, yet I must profess to you, I do not think the natural Notion of God includes those Attributes you speak of. Why may not God be a necessary Agent? And then there is no Danger of an After-reckoning with Him.

*Sebast.*



*Sebast.* I AM sorry to find so unworthy a Notion of GOD still to have any Room in your Thoughts. It is certain, indeed, that if He be only a necessary Agent, then all Fear of a Judgment is discharged; and as certain, that all Religion can be nothing else but a groundless Superstition. For, then GOD must needs be a very tame Deity, which Men may play with, and abuse at Pleasure; as the Frogs did by their wooden King in the Fable.

BUT then, what Need is there of any GOD at all, if a necessary Agent will serve the Turn? Why can we not as well suppose the World to be eternal, as make such a contemptible Being as a necessary Agent is, to be eternal, only to give Beginning to the World?

OR rather, if we attribute one Perfection, *i. e.* Eternity, to Him, why not all the rest, which seem to be inseparable from it! Forasmuch as it is not imaginable how the first Cause should be the meanest of all; and He that gave those other Perfections to other Things, should be destitute of them Himself.

OR, how can we believe that such a fetter'd, impotent, unthinking, and unwise Being, should make a World in such Beauty and Perfection? Or at least, how is it possible, that a necessary Agent (which is like a Galley-Slave chained down to his Bench, and confin'd to his Task and Subject) should make a World with such Curiosity and Diversity of Things, yet with that exquisite Order and Harmony which we observe in Nature?

Do you think that the Frame of Things could not possibly have been any otherwise than they are? Can you fancy that nothing could have been

better nor worse than it is now? If you see any Footsteps of Wisdom or Choice, any Possibility that any Thing should have been otherwise than it is, you forego your necessary Agent.

Do not you see great and manifest Instances of Design and Contrivance in the Order of Things, viz. one Thing fitted to another, and one subordinate to another, and all together conspiring to some publick End and Use? Now, sure a necessary Agent could not guide Things so, because it hath no Ends or Designs.

AGAIN, if GOD be a necessary Agent, I would fain be resolved, how it came to pass that we are not so too? I think you granted me, even now, that we chuse our own Way, propound Ends to ourselves, and voluntarily pursue them, when we could (if we pleased) as freely chuse and act contrary. Now how to conceive that I should be a free Agent, and that He who made me so, should be a necessary one; that is, that the Effect should be more excellent than the Cause, neither I, nor (as I suspect) any Body else can understand.

BUT I need not, in this Place, industriously set myself to confute this odd Conceit of GOD's being only a necessary Agent, because in my third Branch, I shall fundamentally undermine it; and therefore, with your Leave, I now hasten to that.

*Bioph.* Go on then, in GOD's Name.

*Sebast.* MY third and last Proof for a Judgment to come is this; GOD doth actually exercise such a Providence in and over the World for the present, as gives great Assurance that He will judge it hereafter: For these are, as it were, the two several  
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Ends of the same Chain ; a Providence here, and a Judgment hereafter : They naturally and mutually draw on each other. If there be a Judgment to come, there must be a provident Eye over the World for the present, in order to it ; that is, GOD must so mind the World, that He perfectly understands how Things go, how Men carry themselves, what there is amiss amongst them, what requires Punishment, and what deserves a Reward ; otherwise He cannot be said to judge, forasmuch as, without this, it might rather be said, there is a Day of Execution coming, than a Day of Judgment. And on the other Side, if there be a Providence in this World, and it be true that GOD observes how Men carry themselves towards Him, it must speak his Intention to reward and punish hereafter, in Proportion to such Observation ; for otherwise that Providence would be fruitless, and to no Purpose ; it would be a mere Matter of vain Curiosity, and a needless Trouble to the Divine Majesty, as the *Epicureans* objected. But now, that GOD doth exercise such a Providence in this World, from whence we may reasonably presage a Judgment to come, I think will abundantly appear by these three Things :

1. THERE hath been such a Thing as we call Prophecy, or Prediction of Things before they come to pass ; which cannot be without a Providence.

2. THERE have been Miracles ; which could not be without the Divine Interposition.

3. THERE are frequent Instances in all Ages, of a Divine Presence in, and Influence upon, the Affairs of the World.

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1. FIRST,



I. FIRST, I ground the Assertion of a Providence, upon the Prophecies and Predictions of Things before-hand, which have been verified by real Effects in their respective Times and Seasons. It is evident, that whosoever is able certainly to foretell Things before they are, must see thro' all the Series of Causes which produce such Events; especially, if he define all the precise Time, and other Circumstances of the Accomplishment; but above all, whosoever shall declare before-hand, not only what shall come to pass, according to the Course of natural and necessary Causes, but also such Things as are casual and contingent, or subject to the Choice and Indifferency of free and voluntary Agents, must have a curious and accurate Inspection into the Conjunctions and Conspiracy of all Things, as well as into their particular Natures and Inclinations: For as every Effect must have its Causes before it can be, so the Prediction of such Effect must depend upon a certain Knowledge of those respective Causes which are pregnant of it. Therefore if there ever hath been such a Thing as Prophecy, there is a Providence.

Now for the Matter of Fact; or, that there have been certain and punctual Predictions of Things long before they came to pass, is the constant Belief of all Nations; and he that denies it, must give the Lie to the greatest and best Part of Mankind. You may remember, that *Tully* pursues this Argument in his Books *de Divinatione*; and he there gives too many and too remarkable Instances of it, to be denied or eluded: But I shall chuse to set before you only two Passages out of the Holy Scripture. For, tho' I perceive you have not such a Reverence for those Books as they deserve, yet such palpable Matters of Fact as I shall instance in, and which were of so publick a Concern,

cern, and general Notice, as whereupon the Revolution of whole Nations depended, can afford no Ground for calling in Question the Truth of them. And let me tell you, I make Choice of these Instances out of those Writings, for no other Cause but for the Notoriety of the Fact, and the Easiness of Confutation, if it had been otherwise.

THE former of the two Passages is the Prediction of the Slavery of the Children of *Israel* in the Land of *Egypt*, and their miraculous Deliverance thence, above four hundred Years before it came to pass; and the Accomplishment (when the Time came) answering the Prediction precisely to a Day, so as to be observed by the whole Body of the People; and the Remembrance of it perpetuated by an Anniversary Solemnity ever after: As you may see, *Exod. xii. 41.*

THE other Instance is, the *Babylonish* Captivity, which was foretold above seventy Years before it came to pass; and that in a Time of the greatest Unlikelihood that any such Calamity should befall; namely, it was prophesied of when the *Jews* were in the greatest Peace and Prosperity. And then for the Term of this Captivity, that was foretold to last seventy Years, neither more or less. And both these Periods (as well as other Circumstances) were exactly hit in the Event of Things.

Now in both these Instances, the Things were prophesied of so long before-hand, there were so many Obstacles in the Way of their Accomplishment, and so much of the Will of Man also interested in both the Cases; and yet notwithstanding such punctual Exactness is to be seen in the Event, that it is plainly impossible that human Wit should so much as guess probably at them; therefore the

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Predictions must be grounded upon Divine Intimation: And then GOD is so far from being a necessary Agent, that it is apparent He minds the World, and looks narrowly into all the Parts of it, from one End to another, and governs and manages inferior Causes.

2. My second Proof of an actual Providence, is, from Miracles. By a Miracle I mean any Thing coming to pass, which is, either for the Matter or Manner of it, above the Power of natural Causes, or at least, contrary to their established Course and Order; whether it be effected by heightening them above their ordinary Pitch, or accelerating their Motion, or by suddenly bringing those Causes together which lay at a Distance; or whether it be by depressing, suspending, or superseding any of them.

AND I reason thus: If any Thing have ever been brought to pass above the Capacity, or out of the Method of natural and common Causes, then there is an active Deity which exerts his Power in that Case. Or if ever the Course of Nature hath been interrupted, it must be by the Interposition of the supreme Cause. For it is neither intelligible that Nature should go out of Course of itself; nor possible that being once so out of Course, it should ever be able to recover its former Order, without the Help of Omnipotency. Therefore, if ever there have been a Miracle in the World, there is a Proof of a Providence.

Now that such extraordinary Things have happen'd, cannot be doubted without great Ignorance, or denied without Impudence. I know there is a Sort of witty Men (in their Way) who endeavour to put a Slight upon Miracles, and therefore are  
very



very captious and critical in such Cases as this ; but if they can elude some Occurrences that have been believed miraculous, yet they will never be able to evade them all. And if there have been but one acknowledged Miracle in all the Time of this World, it will be sufficient to prove a Providence. They will, perhaps, impute some Cures that have been said to be done by Miracle, to the Efficacy of some Medicine ; altho' they can neither tell us what that Remedy was, nor much less how the Symptoms should so suddenly cease upon the Use of it.

OR if they could speak tolerable Sense in some of those Particulars, yet what natural Account can be given of the Raising of the Dead, or of unlearned Men's speaking all Kind of Languages in an Instant ? What natural Cause will they assign of the Sun's standing still in *Joshua's* Time ? Or of that preter-natural Eclipse at our Saviour's Passion ? What could intercept the Sun's Light, when the two Luminaries were in Opposition ; or what restored it to its Motion again, when it was interrupted, as in the former Instance ? Or to its Light again, when it intermitted, as in the latter Instance ? To endeavour to give natural Accounts of these Things, will prove as absurd and ridiculous, as to deny the Matter of Fact.

BUT if any of these Instances will not pass with such Men, because they were over long before our Time, or because the Truth of them depends upon the Authority of Scripture, there are other innumerable Passages in all Ages, not liable to that Exception, that cannot be resolved into any Cause less than a supreme and omnipotent.

AMONGST

AMONGST which what will they say to this, which happens almost every Year; namely, that after a long wet Season, it shall suddenly clear up and be fair Weather again; and contrariwise, after a long dry Season, it shall unexpectedly be wet and rainy? Whereas, if they look only to natural Causes, the quite contrary must happen: Forasmuch as the more Rain hath been at any Time, the more may be still, because there are the more Vapours from whence Clouds are raised: And the longer a dry Season hath lasted, there is every Day the less Reason to expect Rain; because there want Vapours out of which it should be raised. Now to impute this Change only to the Winds, is to beg the Question; for it is well enough known that the Winds depend upon Vapour, as well as Rain. And to ascribe it to the Stars, is to confess, that, right or wrong, we will shut GOD out of the World. But this leads me to my

3. **THIRD** Proof of a present Providence, viz. The more frequent and ordinary Instances of a Divine Influence upon the Affairs of the World. The Effects of which, tho' they are not accounted miraculous, because they are common, yet they give sufficient Indication of Divine Administration. And of this Kind, there are so many which offer themselves to an observant Mind, that to seek Flaws, and go about to make specious Objections against some few of them, will be rather an Argument of resolved Unwillingness to believe, than of any just Grounds of Infidelity.

Now under this Head I reckon, in the first Place, as very observable, that there is scarcely any great Thing ever brought about in the World, which GOD may not be seen to have an Hand in: And that

that may be collected generally from the Inadequateness of the visible Means. As when great Preparations are defeated and laid aside, and mean and inconsiderable Ones do the Business. This is that which *Solomon* observed long ago, *That the Battle is not to the Strong, nor the Race to the Swift, nor Bread to Men of Understanding*: And we cannot want an Example for it nearer Hand, when we remember the Restoration of King *Charles II.* For it pleased God to deal in that Particular, as He did by *Gideon's* Army, when He dismissed the greatest Part of the Forces, and did his Business with a few, and those very unlikely for such an Achievement.

BUT more admirable than this is the Preservation of the Holy Scripture in all Ages; both from total Abolition by the Flames of Persecution; and from Corruption by the capricious Fancies of such Men as would neither sincerely believe it, nor absolutely reject it. Such also is the Preservation of the Christian Religion, when all the Wit, and all the Power of the World combined together against it: And such was the Success of the Apostles in propagating that Religion, and planting the Christian Church; when a few Fishermen leaven'd the World with a Doctrine quite against the Grain of it, and naked Truth prevailed against Authority, Art, and Interest, in Conjunction.

HITHERTO also I reduce the Maintenance of Magistracy and civil Government: And I look upon it as a standing Evidence of a Providence, that the strong Bands of wicked and refractory Men should stand in Awe of a single Man, like themselves, only because he is invested with Authority. This, if it be duly consider'd is very strange, and can be resolved into nothing but a Providence.

Nor



Nor is it less strange, that, considering the great Numbers of evil Men, their Secresy and Closeness, their Cunning and Falshood, their Envy and Necessity, their Activity and Selfishness, they should be able to do no more Hurt in the World than they do. Why do they not swear Men out of their Lives and Fortunes, and act whatsoever their Revenge, or Covetousness, or Lust shall prompt them to? No Account can be given of this, but the powerful Restraint of Providence.

MOREOVER, there are remarkable Examples in all Ages of evil Men, dogged by their own Guilt, and tortured by their own Consciences; when no Body else either accused or hurt them. And on the other Side, as frequent Instances of virtuous Men, who have been very comfortable under great Difficulties, and whose Spirits have been born up with an admirable Bravery under such Pressures as would crush and sink other Men: And this, altho' the Persons thus carrying themselves, were otherwise of no remarkable Strength or Courage. Neither of which Passages can be resolved into any other Causes than the mighty Influence of a Providence.

NAY, further: It is very observable how strangely sometimes secret Sins are brought to Light, especially such as Murder and Treachery, and where all Arts and Advantages were made Use of for Concealment; such Persons becoming their own Accusers, when no Body else could do it for them; and not unusually their own Executioners too.

ABOVE all these, there are some Instances of Vengeance befalling very flagitious Men so signally and with such pat and significant Circumstances, that (without any Uncharitableness) we may be led by

by the Suffering to the Sin ; as in the Case of *Adonibezek*, *Judg. i. 7.* whose barbarous Usage of threescore and ten Kings, cutting off their Thumbs and great Toes, and making them, like Dogs, gather their Meat under his Table, was repaid upon himself, in the same Severity. Of Kind to which are those panick Fears and Shiverings, that oftentimes attend blood-guilty Men, as long as they live : And tho' they may have escaped Revenge from the Hand of Men, yet this, as a *Cain's Mark* set upon them by the Hand of God, indelibly sticks by them, and follows them to their Graves.

It is needless to say any Thing more on this Subject ; forasmuch as every Man that doth not wilfully shut his Eyes, may collect Instances to this Purpose, both from the Government of the World in general, and from his own Fortunes in particular. For besides the quiet Serenity (in Token of the Divine Favour) which usually attends a virtuous Course of Life ; and the Anxiety, and Uneasiness, which as frequently (in Testimony of the Divine Dislike) attends a wicked one ; it is not a very unusual, nor (to be sure) an unpleasant Sight, to behold the former crowned with signal Success, and the latter punished with Shame and Beggary. And this sometimes shall happen in such Circumstances, when there is nothing to which this different Success can be imputed, but Providence ; forasmuch as the latter shall otherwise be more cunning for the World, and every whit as industrious and frugal as the former : But the one is under the Blessing of Heaven, and the other is apparently blasted and cursed.

AND now what think you, *Biophilus*, upon the whole Matter ? Have I not acquitted myself in all the three Things I propounded ? And laying all

these Things together, is not here sufficient Evidence to determine a prudent Man in the Case, and so satisfy him that there is a Providence in this World; and consequently, that there will be a Judgment hereafter?

*Bioph.* I cannot tell, *Sebastian*. I confess you have said many very considerable Things; and some of them beyond what I could have expected in the Case. But I have one main Objection, which especially touches the last Branch of your Argument; and which, if it stick by you, all you have said will signify nothing; but if you come clearly off from it I shall not know what to think of the Business. It is this, in short: I do not see any such settled Method in the Management of the Affairs of this World, as must necessarily argue a Providence. For, in particular, notwithstanding all you have said, it cannot be denied, that very often the best of Men are oppressed, and born down by ill Fortune; and contrariwise, evil Men are very happy and prosperous. Therefore it may seem that those Instances which you collect in Favour of your Opinion, may happen by Chance, rather than by Providence: And if there be no Providence in this World, by your own Argument there can be no Judgment hereafter.

*Sebast.* If that be all, or the main of what you have to object, I am in Hope to see some good Issue of this Conference: For, in the first Place, you know, that which is impeached by this Objection, is but one single Instance, out of many which I have brought for the Assertion of a Providence; and consequently, if this should fail, yet so long as the others are unshaken by it, that great Doctrine may stand firm notwithstanding it. However, I will briefly say these three Things in the Case; viz. *First,*



*First*, THAT some Measure of Intricacy or Obscurity in the Dispensation of Divine Providence, is no Argument against it, but for it.

*Secondly*, THAT there are very great Reasons assignable, why it may please the Divine Majesty to proceed sometime, indiscriminately, and keep no constant visible Method in the Distributions of Good and Evil in this Life.

*Thirdly*, YET, however this be sometimes obscure, there are at other Times sufficient and legible Instances of a distinguishing Providence.

*First*, SOME Measure of Intricacy in the Dispensations of Divine Providence, is so far from being an Argument against it, that it is a great Argument for it. For if we do not make GOD a mere necessary Agent, (which I hope I have satisfied you in) we must allow something to his Prerogative and Sovereignty; and consequently grant, that He may do some Things whereof He doth not make us acquainted with the Reasons: And we may very well allow to his Wisdom, to have a Reach beyond us, and to have other Measures to govern the World by, than we could have made for Him. What! Shall we call GOD to Account of his Management? Shall He not govern the World at all unless He order it just as we would have Him? This is apparently so far from being reasonable, that it would be much more so to conclude on the contrary; namely, that if there were no Depths in the Divine Counsel which we could not fathom, no *Mæanders* in the Way of Providence which we could not trace, it would be very suspicious whether there were any Thing of Divinity in the whole Business. For if Things were constantly managed one Way, without any Variation,

we should be apt to think all was under the rigid Laws of a fatal Necessity. If, on the other Side, there were no Rule to be observed, no Footsteps of any Method, then we should be tempted to think Chance ruled the World. But when we observe an Intermixture of these two, *viz.* that there is a Rule, though there be some Exceptions from it, then we have Reason to conclude, that all is under a powerful and a free Agent, who, if he be also infinitely wise, cannot but see Reason for several Things, which we cannot apprehend.

*Secondly,* THERE are very great and weighty Reasons assignable, why, in this particular Instance of Providence, (namely, in the Distribution of Good and Evil in this World) the Divine Majesty should not gratify our Curiosity with a plain Account of his Proceedings, but make some Exceptions to his general Rule: Amongst which these following are considerable.

*First,* BECAUSE such a constant and visible Exercise of distributive Justice, as your Objection seems to require, would be such an irrefragable and palpable Evidence of a Providence, as would leave no Room for the Discovery of Ingenuity, or a virtuous Disposition: For, it would be no Argument of Love to God, or Goodness, that a Man took Care to serve God, if he constantly stood over us in a visible and undeniable Providence; so that every Offender were taken in every Fact, and presently led to Execution; and, on the other Side, every virtuous Action were forthwith rewarded and crowned. In short, it is not agreeable to the Mind of God, to over-run the Freedom of our Choice, since He hath endowed us with it: Should He do so, He would act contrary to

to Himself, and to his own Glory, as well as to the Nature and Condition of Mankind.

AGAIN, secondly, a chequered and diversified Method of Divine Providence, wherein there is an Intertexture of Prosperity and Adversity in the Fortunes of virtuous Men, tends more to their Improvement, than a more regular and constant Providence would do. For, as a continued Course of Prosperity is too apt to tempt Men to be wanton and careless; so a perpetual Series of Adversity would be apt to sink and depress their Spirits: But a middle Way of Interchange in their Condition, balances them on both Sides, and maintains them in a more even Temper and Conversation. And for this Reason it pleases the Divine Wisdom to make such false Steps, as you are apt to imagine them to be.

To which add, in the third Place, that here-lies the very Secret of Divine Wisdom; and by this very Way He doth most effectually assure us of the Point in Question, (namely a Judgment to come) in that there is such apparent Necessity of it. For if the Divine Majesty should let the present World run at Random, and interpose Himself in no Case to check the Hurry, and punish the Disorder, there would seem no Reason to expect Justice from Him hereafter, who gave no Token of it all this while: And, on the other Side, if He interposed so frequently and constantly, as to leave no Irregularity unpunished, nor any brave Action unrewarded, there would be no Business left, nor Need of a Day of Judgment. Whereas by affording us some plain Instances of his Discrimination in this World, we are satisfied that He minds how Things go, and is able to judge; and yet by

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permitting



permitting several other Things to run riot, and seemingly to be unanimadverted upon, He hath, as it were, cut out Work for a Day of Judgment.

*Thirdly*, NOTWITHSTANDING all this, as I said before, there are some sufficient and undeniable Instances of a distinguishing Providence I have granted to you, that sometimes the Ways of God are intricate and involved; and I have offered at some Reasons of it, to which many others might have been added; and, amongst the rest, that by this Means we might be kept humble and modest, and taught to admire and reverence God, rather than to judge or pronounce of Him. For these, I say, and other Reasons best known to infinite Wisdom, He thinks fit sometimes to lose us in the Mæander of his Ways: Yet, I say, they are not always thus obscure; but sometimes He treads such plain and direct Paths, that we may easily follow Him. And of this I have set before you several Examples already, and whosoever will diligently attend to it, may easily collect more: But I will not omit to put you in mind of one great standing one, and (as far as is possible) beyond all Exception; and that was in the History of the *Jewish* Nation, who were infallibly sure to be happy, prosperous, so long as they stuck to the true God, and the Laws he had given them by *Moses*; and as sure to be signally miserable and calamitous whensoever they apostatized from their God, or debauched their Religion. So that that People was placed as a Light upon a Mountain, and were an illustrious Instance to all the World, of that great Truth we are now discoursing of; and if there were no more Instances of this Kind, that alone would be sufficient for the Purpose.

*Bioph.* I must confess, if the Story be true there was a very strange Fate attended that People.

*Sebast.* FATE! do you call it? What Colour or Pretence in the World is there for imputing those admirable Revolutions to Fate? Could blind Fate make Distinction of Persons and Actions, and apply itself in the Distribution of Good or Evil, in Proportion to Mens Deserts or Miscarriages? Do not disparage your own Discretion so much, as to use the Word Fate in such a Case: No; assure yourself, that was a signal Display of divine Providence, and such an one as you cannot expect or demand a greater.

*Bioph.* BUT if it were the Effect of Providence, I wonder how it comes to pass that there is no such Thing now; or why all the rest of Mankind was neglected by Divine Providence, and only that People, and in that Age and Corner of the World so carefully managed by it.

*Sebast.* O *Biophilus*! ask not God an Account of his Prerogative, much less, prescribe to Him how He should govern the World. What if He, pitying the dark State of the World then, did something extraordinary to relieve and enlighten it? And what if, having once given such abundant Proof of Himself, He shall think that sufficient to all after-Ages? Who shall expostulate the Matter with Him, especially since He hath not left us destitute of sufficient Grounds to determine a prudent Man in the Case! Which is all I have pretended to assert all this while, and I think I have made it good at last, though with some Tediouſness of Discourse.

*Bioph.*

*Bioph.* I cannot tell what to say more for the present, but I will consider farther of it at Leisure.

*Phil.* Ay, but do it quickly, good *Biophilus*, you sceptical Gentlemen are apt to take too long Time to consider of these Matters. You know, die we must, and that shortly too, so that we have not any long Time to consider in. What Surprise would it be, if whilst we stand doubting and disputing, we should hear the Sound of the last Trump, and be summoned to that great Tribunal? When Death once arrests us, there is no Bail will be taken; we must come to a strict Account, and await an irreversible Doom. So that there is no dallying in this Matter.

WHEN *Noah*, for no less than one hundred and twenty Years together preached Repentance, and foretold a Flood coming to drown all the World, no Question but the Generality of Men laughed at him, as a timorous, hypochondriacal Person; they could object how unusual a Thing it was to be talk'd of; a Thing that no Man had seen, or had ever happened to the World before: They could discourse philosophically in the Case too, and represent it as a very absurd Thing to imagine, that the Water should rise above the Earth, and overflow the Tops of their stately Houses; for (might they say) where shall there be Water enough to do it? From whence should it come? Or how should this Fellow have Notice of it, before all other Men? And perhaps they would conclude, that, at worst, they should have Time to shift for themselves, and escape as well as others. Hereupon, they eat, and drank, and feasted, and made merry; and laughed at that precise Coxcomb, with his new Machine of an Ark:

But



But so (saith our Saviour) *shall the Coming of the Son of Man be.*

ALAS, *Biophilus!* whilst we dream, the Judgment slumbers not; whilst we doubt and dispute GOD is in Earnest; and the Time draws on apace, when *Christ Jesus, the Judge of the World, shall come in the Glory of his Father, and of all the holy Angels. The Heavens shall then melt away, and the Earth be on Fire, from one End of it to another: The Dead shall rise out of their Graves, and make an huge Assembly: The Books of all Mens Actions shall be opened, and the Devil, together with every Man's own Conscience, shall be the Accusers. Then shall all those that have lived virtuously and holily, look up with Joy and Comfort, to see their Saviour become their Judge; to find a Vindication from all those unjust Censures that have passed upon them here below; to come to an End of their Labours, a Reward of their Services, the Accomplishment of their Faith and Hopes. What Joy will be in their Countenances! What Glory upon their Heads! How the Angels smile upon them, and welcome them to their Journey's End, and Heaven opens in an admirable Scene of Light and Glory to receive them!*

BUT, on the other Side, all that have lived wickedly and unprofitably, *shall look pale, and tremble, and call upon the Rocks and Mountains to hide them from the Face of the Lamb that sits upon the Throne; for they shall see all black and dismal about them; no Tears will move Pity, no Rhetorick will persuade, no Excuses will be admitted, no Appeal allowed, no Refuge to be found, nor Reprieve to be hoped for; but they shall hear that dreadful Sentence, Depart, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels; and shall see*  
Hell

Hell open her Mouth to receive them into unquenchable Flames.

*Bioph.* I PROTEST you speak with such Feeling, *Philander*, that your Discourse hath more Power upon me, than all the Arguments that ever I heard in my Life: And I know not what is the Matter, but my Heart trembles; therefore let me once more entreat you to adjourn the Remainder of this Discourse 'till another Time.

*Phil.* AH, dear Neighbour! Do not prove like unhappy *Felix*: Do not go about to elude what you cannot evade: No, put not off this Business a Moment longer. Now that it seems God hath touched your Heart, quench not his Holy Spirit; it may be, you will never be in such a Temper again, if you lose this Opportunity.

*Bioph.* I ASSURE you, I like this Temper (as you call it, so well that I do not desire to feel more of it, but if you are resolved to go on to torment me, I pray do me the Favour first to answer me this Question. If these Things be so as you represent them, how comes it to pass, that Men unconcerned about Religion, die as comfortably as any others? The Reason of my Question is this, because you will pretend, that whilst Men are well in Health, and swimming with the Tide of Prosperity, they may either put off the Thoughts of these Things, though they be true; or the Noise of Business, and the Careless of their Sense, may obscure all Apprehension of another World. But sure, when Men find themselves dying, it should be too late for them to flatter themselves, or to admit the Flatteries of others; then surely Prejudices cease, and Men are at Leisure to think. What then, I say, can be the Reason, if these Things be true, that

that there is not as remarkable a Difference in Mens Tempers when they come to die, as there seems to be in their Conversation whilst they are alive?

*Sebast.* I APPREHEND your Question very well, and the Reasons of your asking it. And for Answer to it, I pray tell, what is the Reason that Men that love their Health and their Estates both very well, will nevertheless be Drunkards, and Whoremasters, and Gamesters; though they see, by daily Experience, that these are sure Methods to out them of both? You will tell me, I suppose, that they feed themselves with absurd and unreasonable Hopes, which fool their Discretion; or that they are bewitched and besotted with those Kind of Pleasures, and so consider nothing at all. Why, just so it is here: The Things we speak of are undoubtedly true, and the Miscarriage in them is fatal; but Men are careless and incogitant, and slip into the Pit of Destruction before they are aware: They live merrily, because they never think of any Thing, and they die as sottishly as they lived.

AGAIN, There is another Sort of Men, that are captious and conceited, who will chop Logick, as we say, with GOD Almighty; they will have not only their Reason satisfied, but their Curiosity also, or they will not believe; they must see a Spirit, and Heaven, and Hell, or one must come from the Dead, or they will not be contented. Now GOD will not indulge this Humour of theirs, and they are resolved to venture Him; that is, they will be damned, rather than forego it.

BESIDES, There are others take a great deal of Pains to disbelieve: They will use all the Arts of Sophistry, all the Tricks and Evasions of Wit, in-  
trench



trench and fortify themselves in their Atheistical Conceits: In a Word, they will cheat their own Reason, out-face their Conscience, and bring upon themselves a stupid Insensibility of all that is good and virtuous; and so in Conclusion they die quietly, and go silently into the bottomless Pit.

ADD to this, that it is very probable many of these Men may be very far from dying chearfully, though we are not able to observe their Agonies and Torments; for it may very well be, that when once they begin to consider what a desperate Condition they are in, the very Thoughts of that, together with their bodily Disease, overwhelm their Spirits, and make their Passage out of the World more compendious, but never the more comfortable.

AFTER all, you shall find some of the aforesaid Persons, when they come to die, sadly bewail their Folly and Carelessness: But where ever did you hear of an holy and virtuous Man, that repented of his Choice or Pains in Religion, or Care of his Soul, and Solicitude in Preparation for this Occasion? It is possible, indeed, such a Man may express no Transports, because his Body is like other Mens, and the Strength of his Disease may enfeeble his Spirits, and cloud his Reason, and so interrupt the Exercise of his Faith. And, on the other Side, the irreligious Man, though perhaps (as you suppose) he cannot, or will not dissemble at the Approach of Death, yet he may be sottish and insensible, and then whatsoever Difference of State they are entering upon, there may be no discernible Difference in their Departure hence. And so, you see, your Question will not serve to the Purpose you propounded it for.

*Phil.*

*Phil.* COME, *Biophilus*, leave these sceptical-Artifices, these captious Questions; do not seek out Ways to muzzle your own Conscience, or impose upon your Reason: A Judgment there will be, and it is all the Wisdom in the World to be prepared for it. It is in our Power, by the Grace of God, to order Matters so, that we shall rather hope and wish for it, than fear it: And what vast Odds is there between them two? You are sensible that it is only a Judgment following Death, that makes Death terrible. Indeed it is possible our Bodies may be disturbed at the Assaults of it; but mere Death can never shake our Minds, or discompose one Thought, if we are satisfied that all will be well after it. And what an happy and desirable Condition were it, to be out of the Reach of that King of Terrors, to see Light through that dark Vault of the Grave, to out-live all a Man's Fears, and to live to his Hopes? What a strange Alteration will that one Thing make in a Man's Projections and Designs, in his Countenance, and in his Spirit, and in the whole Management of himself? For who can be afraid of any other Accident, that hath no Cause to fear Death? Who would be much discomposed whether his temporal Affairs succeed well or ill, that is provided for Eternity? Who will stoop so low, as to lay any Stress upon Fame, that hath approved himself to God and his own Conscience, and can stand the Shock of the great Trial at the Day of Judgment? He that is in a Condition not to fear Death, will have no Reason to fear Men, or Devils; but may be as bold as a Lion: He will crouch to no Body, flatter and humour no Body, for no Body can hurt him: And so his Life is easy as well as comfortable, forasmuch as he has no Body to please but God and his own Conscience.

BUT as I was saying, this is to be prepared for. Salvation is not a Matter of Course, nor the Judgment a mere Piece of State and Formality, but infinitely sacred and solemn. The Judge is wise, and holy, and just; the Trial strict and severe, the Doom irreverfible, the Misery intolerable, if a Man miscarry; as well as the Felicity unspeakable, if he stand right at that Tribunal: And to all this, the Time draws on apace; we feel ourselves daily dying, therefore it concerns us to do what is to be done out of Hand.

*Bioph.* I AM convinced that it is the wisest Course to provide for it, if it could be done without too much Trouble.

*Phil.* АН, *Biophilus*! Can any Care be too great in such a Concern? Can any Thing seem troublesome, that may at once secure us from all other Troubles? But the Trouble is not great neither; it is but being heartily religious, and all is done.

*Bioph.* THAT is soon said, I confess; but not so soon done. Besides, I am never the wiser for such a general Advice: For there are so many Religions in the World, that it is hard to know which to trust to. Some sublime Religion to such an Height of Spirituality, (as they call it) that a Man cannot tell what to make of it: And again, some make no more of it, than honest Morality. Some dress it up so fine, with so many Trappings and Ornaments, that it is hard to find what the naked Truth of the Thing is: And others render it so plain and coarse, that a Man is tempted to despise it. In a Word, it seems to me to be what the Painter pleases, so far as I see some describe out of the Pleasantness of their own sanguine Fancy, and others out of the black Humour of their hypochondriack Passions.

So



So that upon the whole Matter, I think I had as good maintain my own Character, and with-hold my Assent 'till Men are better agreed upon the Point.

*Sebast.* GOD forbid, *Biophilus*; for that you cannot do, unless you will adventure to be damned; as certainly you must, if you be found to be of no Religion.

*Bioph.* WHY, have you less Charity for Men of my Temper, than for all the World besides?

*Sebast.* FAR be it from me to be uncharitable towards any Men. But I must tell you, I have less Hope for that Man that hath no Faith at all, than for him that hath a bad one: And it must be a very bad Religion indeed, that is no better than none. For though by Reason of the Variety of Persuasions, a Man may be so misled, as to perish in a blind Devotion; yet certainly, he that is of no Religion at all, cannot be saved. But what Need is there of either of these? There are a great many false Religions it is acknowledged; but there is a true too, and that not so hard to discern as you represent it.

COME, I will tell you a Religion, that all the World shall agree in; and my Soul for yours, you shall be safe if you comply with it. Do not stare: It is no more but this; *Live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World.* Or, if you will have it in other Words; resolve with yourself not to do that Thing (whatever come of it) that you cannot answer to GOD, and your own Conscience; and do every Thing within your Power, that may approve and recommend you to both; and thenceforward fear not a Day of Judgment.

*Bioph.* Now you speak to the Purpose, indeed; that I must needs say is good Counsel, and such as I think all the World is agreed in.

I THANK you both for your good Company, and your charitable Offices towards my Satisfaction; and I do already assure you of this Fruit of it, that by your Conversation I have learnt, that all Religion is not acting a Part, and playing the Hypocrite, which I was apt to suspect heretofore; for I see you both are so hearty in it, and yet Men of greater Sagacity than myself, that I tell you truly, I begin to think it becomes me seriously to consider it. Good Night to you, good *Sebastian*.

*The End of the Second Conference.*

6 JY 64





A

WINTER EVENING

# CONFERENCE.

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PART III.

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SEBASTIAN, PHILANDER, BIOPHILUS.

*Sebastian.*

**W**ELL met again, Gentlemen; I hope  
we shall one Day meet in Heaven.

*Philander.* God grant it, good *Sebastian*; and  
truly for my Part, I am persuaded we shall the sooner  
get there, the more we have of your Company and  
Conversation in the mean Time.

*Sebast.* No Compliments, *Philander*: I am glad  
to observe you so chearful. Come, Gentlemen,



what think you of our Journey; I hope by this Time *Biophilus* is resolved: You promised, Sir, to consider of it.

*Biophilus.* I HAVE considered a little, but in Truth I think Winter no good Time for travelling, especially for the undertaking of so long a Journey.

*Sebast.* BE not discouraged, Sir, the Journey is not so long as you may fancy, and the Way is very good.

You will think it strange, perhaps, but it is very true, that no Time so good as Winter for this Expedition; the short Days, dark and cold Nights, the very Dirt and Wet, and all the seeming Disadvantages of the Season, (which probably may run in your Head, *Biophilus*) all make for our Purpose. The Severities of the Weather, which constrain us to lay aside other Business, give us the more Leisure to attend this; the short Days are followed with long Evenings, which afford us Opportunity to set Things in Order, to discourse together, and to instruct and animate one another in our intended Enterprize; and in the dark solitary Nights (our Minds being then free from the Distraction of Variety of Objects) our Thoughts will run this Way with wonderful Speed, if we do but direct them aright. So that, in Truth, we may make real Progress towards our designed Port, even as we sit here.

*Bioph.* BUT, in Earnest, I am somewhat too old and crazy to undertake the Journey.

*Sebast.* NAY, believe me, the older the better. An old Man, if he set to it in Earnest, will outstrip

strip all others in this Voyage; such Men will lose no Time in Trifles; Experience hath taught them Caution, and made them very wary of all Diversions and Impediments. In short, such Men are so sensible of the Inconveniences of this our present Country, that it is great Odds, but they will put on so vigorously as to get to their Journey's End before the youngest of us all.

THOUGH I should have been right glad to have found you better resolved, and hoped that this present Conference should rather have been directed to the encouraging one another in our Course, than spent in disputing our Port; yet in Hopes that at length you will become a Votary for the Holy Land, I will present to you two Things.

FIRST, the Influence of Religion on civil Society. Of this you will easily be sensible, if you consider how inconceivable it is, that mere external Force, or Fear of human Punishment, should be sufficient to keep the World in Order, when (as it often happens) flagitious Men find themselves either secured from that Danger by the Secrecy of their Plots, or protected by their Strength and Multitude. And then you must acknowledge, that to the Ends aforesaid there is a Necessity that some superior Power not only protect Governors from Violence, but also strike the Minds of Men with an awful Apprehension of them as his Favourites and Vicegerents; but this cannot be done but upon such Principles of Religion as we now speak of; therefore he that infringes that, weakens both Law and Government, and is an Enemy to civil Society.

AGAIN, there can be no Obligation of Oaths, and consequently no Security of Faith and Trust between Man and Man, but upon Supposition of a  
 GOD

GOD that takes Notice of what Men do, and who will call them to an Account in another World: So that the Man who is destitute of these Persuasions, can neither give Security of Loyalty to his Prince, nor of Fidelity to his Friend or Neighbour, or any Man he deals with.

*Bioph.* WHY, I pray you, *Sebastian*, may not Men trust one another upon the Security of Honour, Good-Nature or Gratitude, or some such Obligation, without those Fetters of Conscience which you speak of?

*Sebast.* ALAS, *Biophilus*, all those Bonds which you mention are too weak to restrain the licentious Humour of Mind; they may put some little Bias upon Mens Spirits, but they cannot bridle their Passions, curb their Desire of Revenge, nor prevail with them to deny their extravagant Inclinations, when they shall have an Opportunity to gratify them, as we find by daily Experience. For in all the Obligations (below Religion and Conscience) a Man is supposed to be accountable only to himself; and therefore may dispense with himself, and acquit himself upon what Terms he pleases. And therefore wise Men, and especially wise Princes, use not to trust to any of those Securities, but only to that of Religion.

*Bioph.* WELL, but have not Pretenders to Religion played fast and loose with Laws and Government, as well as other Men? Nay, generally you shall observe, that a bigotted Sort of Men are the principal Actors of most of the Tumults and Disorders in the World.

*Sebast.* IF I should object to you the daily and horrible Violations of Faith amongst the Pretenders

to



to Honour, Ingenuity and Gratitude, I know you would answer me, that those Persons were not really Men of Honour, but only Pretenders. And so you may answer yourself in this Case, that they are but Pretenders to the real Principles of Religion, that falsify their Faith and disturb Government.

BESIDES, if I should grant you that the very Bonds of Religion are not able always to restrain the Rage and Folly of some exorbitant Persons; yet certainly it is the most powerful Means to that End, and incomparably beyond all those you have named. And therefore you may remember, when upon Occasion, *Ptolemy*, King of *Ægypt*, sent one *Theodorus*, in the Quality of his Embassador to *Lyfimachus*; this latter refused to treat with him, or admit him under that Character, because he was reputed an Atheist; and being such, he looked upon him as a Person with whom there could be no Security of civil Intercourse,

*Bioph.* I REMEMBER the Story, but I pray you, if *Lyfimachus's* Objection against *Theodorus* was sufficient, how came *Ptolemy* notwithstanding to trust him with the Management of his Affairs?

*Sebast.* TRULY I can give you no other Answer, but that he had not so much Prudence as his Neighbour. But let that pass if you please, and give me Leave in the next Place to represent to you every Man's personal Concern in the Truth of Religion, which is such, that no Man can either live or die comfortably without it.

*Bioph.* WITH all my Heart. Let Princes alone to manage their own Matters. Shew me but that one Point, and it shall suffice.

*Sebast.*

*Sebast.* FOR that, *Biophilus*, you will easily apprehend, that no Man can die chearfully without the Supports of Religion, (I mean, if he die sensibly) because the very best of such a Man's Expectations can be but this, that he shall die like the Beast, and that vital Principle in him, which we call the Soul, shall be absolutely extinguished: So that he shall thenceforth as perfectly cease to be what he was, as if he had never been. Now this I suppose you will readily grant me, must needs be not only a very uncomfortable Prospect, but such a Condition as a Man cannot think of without just Abhorrence, nor be reconciled to, without as great a Contradiction, as it were for him to be supposed to hate his own Being.

YET this is the very best of the irreligious Man's Case, and that which he can never be secure, will be the worst that shall befall him; for it shall prove that there is another World, (and at least it may do so for ought he knows) then his Case is so much worse, that now by Death he must enter upon an Estate for ever, which he hath had no Foresight of, nor made any Preparations for. He encounters a God, whom he hath taken no Care to propitiate towards himself in all the Course of his Life, and what a dismal Plunge must the Approaches of Death (together with such a Surprizal) of Necessity put such a Man into?

*Bioph.* As for Death, I shall easily grant all you say, for that it is no very comfortable Thing at the best; the only Refuge I know is, to make a Virtue of Necessity, and seeing die we must, to take it patiently: But for that Reason I am resolved to live as long as I can, and as chearfully too, and why may not this be done without the Business of Religion?

*Sebast.*

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*Sebast.* IN Truth, *Biophilus*, the Impossibility of living comfortably, without the Helps of Religion, is every whit as evident as that of dying so, and for the very same Reason; forasmuch as whatsoever renders Death terrible, must needs make Life uneasy too. For since Death is acknowledged to be unavoidable, it cannot choose but run in such a Man's Head, shortly I must die, and either everlastingly cease to be, or (which is far worse) begin to be eternally miserable: The least of which two Things (without the miserable Refuge of a perpetual Debauch to keep such a Man from thinking) must be of Force enough to make his Heart ach, and to spoil all the Pleasures of the present Life: Especially considering withall, the Uncertainty of the Tenure, and the innumerable Accidents of human Life; which last Circumstance makes it to become just Matter of Fear at all Times, that by some or other of those Accidents of Mortality, his frail Thread may abruptly be broken; and consequently, who knows but by To-morrow, not only all his Projects and Contrivances, but all his Delights and Entertainments will suffer a total Interruption?

BUT then, if there be a God and another World, (which he can never be sure that there is not) then he can expect nothing less than very suddenly to fall under the Vengeance of that Great Majesty whom he hath always provoked, and never appeased.

BESIDES all this, as we commonly observe, that Atheistical Persons are of all Men the most timorous; so there is great Reason for it, if we consider what a dark and melancholy Thing it must needs be, for so impotent a Creature as a Man is, to live in a World without a God, and without the Security for Providence; for there are a thousand Things  
confessedly



confessedly too strong for us, and which are able to crush and destroy us every Moment. And in this Case, where a Man hath no Help in himself, if he have no Guardian about him neither, if (I say) he cannot look up to some higher Being as his Patron and Protector, it were mere Madness to be valiant; for all the Grounds of Courage fail him, and therefore no Wonder if his Spirits be broken and baffled by the Danger of his Case, and the Lonesomeness of his Condition.

UPON which Account a great Wit of this present Age acknowledged, "That although he for his Part, had no Feeling of the Comforts of Religion, yet he accounted those to be happy Men that had it." For indeed, Life is not Life without those Supports which that (and that only) affords us. But when a Man hath, by the Benefit of that holy Prudence, put all his Interest into God's Custody, and secured himself of another World, then he begins to live indeed, then he may laugh at the present World, despise temporal Life, and defy Death; forasmuch as thenceforth he is out of the Reach of Chance, Fate, or Fortune.

*Phil.* IT is true, *Biophilus*, it is true, as *Sebastian* saith, the World to come is the only Reality, and Religion the only Comfort. O happy we that know there is a God in the World, under whose Providence we live! And blessed be that Divine Goodness, which hath provided another World to receive us, and there promised us eternal Life!

O Heaven, thou End of Cares and Fears, and Beginning of Joy without End! Thou Rest of Souls, and only Satisfaction of great and wise Minds! I am ravished with the Thoughts of thee, I am so transported with Hopes of thee, that I am  
become

become all Life and Spirit; methinks I begin to have Wings, and could fly to Heaven.

*Bioph.* You discourse ingeniously, *Sebastian*; but I pray let me see if you can excuse this Transport of *Philander* from Fanaticism.

*Sebast.* WHY, *Biophilus*, do you think a Man cannot be chearful, unless he be either mad or drunk?

*Bioph.* IT seems then, in your Opinion, Fanaticism is Madness.

*Sebast.* TRULY, Sir, I take it to be little better; especially, if it be in any high Degree. For what (I pray you) is it to be mad, but for a Man's Fancy or Passions so to get Head of him, that he is hurried on wildly and extravagantly, by such an unaccountable *Impetus*, that his Reason is not able to govern him? And on the other Side, what is it for Man to fear without Danger, and to hope without Ground; to believe without Reason, and to think or speak, or do such Things, whereof he can give no Account which is intelligible by the rest of Mankind? This I take to be Fanaticism; and this is plain Madness.

*Bioph.* I AM very glad to hear these Things from you, *Sebastian*, and that you have so slight an Opinion of that Sort of Men, who make such a Figure, or rather such a Dust in the World.

*Sebast.* So far then we are agreed, but all this which I have said will make nothing towards the Proof of your Charge against *Philander*; for though I impute unreasonable and extravagant Raptures to Fancy rather than Faith, and account them rather

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a Distemper of the Body, than the Devotion of the Mind: Yet I must tell you after all, that true and manly Religion is no cold and comfortless Thing, it is not a lukewarm Notion, not a formal Round of Duties; but is lively, vigorous and sparkling, and hath its Joys and Ravishments too; only they are more sedate and governable, as well as more rational and accountable, than those we spake of before; and so I suppose you will find it to be with *Philander*: He hath expressed some Heat, but not without Light, and is both able to govern his Expressions, and to give a sober Reason of them.

*Phil.* HEARTY Thanks, dear *Sebastian*, for vindicating me from the Mis-apprehensions my innocent Joy had exposed me to; and herein you have not only done me a Kindness, but obliged all good Men, and done a Right to true Piety itself, which is apt to be put out of Countenance with the Imputation of Fanaticism, and so far it suffers thereby, that a great many well-disposed, but bashful and timorous Men, are tempted to a strange Kind of Hypocrisy, and to pretend themselves worse than they are, for Fear of incurring the Censure of being Zealots.

BUT now I shall adventure to let my Light shine out Abroad, as well as burn within my Breast. And I cannot forbear upon this Occasion to return my most humble Thanks to GOD, who hath given me Cause to hope in his Goodness, and the Cordial of that Hope hath antidoted me against the Troubles of this present World; for I profess to you, there is so much of Care and Fear, of Labour and Pain here below, what by Disappointments, what by the Malice of evil Men, or by the Follies, Peevishness, and Jealousies of weak Men, that were it not for the Prospect of a better State of Things



Things above, I should be very far from being fond of this Life. But when I consider that at the worst I am under a Providence, so that nothing befalls by Chance, or by the mere Will of Man, but by Divine Appointment and Ordination; and consequently there is nothing but what He both can and will make to work for Good in the Conclusion: And when withall I find myself resolved to submit to his wise Purposes, by which Means it is in my Power to be wiser and better by all Occurrences; and in so doing, have my Hopes improved into an Assurance, that I shall in due Time be translated into those happy Regions above: This comforts my Heart under all the present Inconveniences, and not only support my Spirits, but cheers them, and refreshes my very Countenance. And sometimes the more the Vexations of the World had depressed me, the higher do these Contemplations raise me, so that I break out into such an holy Triumph, as that which you, *Biophilus*, took Notice of.

*Sebast.* *BIOPHILUS*, what is there to amuse you in this Matter? Consider with yourself, how can it be otherwise, but that he who is thoroughly satisfied that it is neither blind Chance, nor surly Fate, nor some ill-natured and unlucky Being; but contrariwise, a great, and wise, and good God, that governs the World: How can it be (I say) but that such a Man must needs be very comfortable under such a Protection?

OR how can it come to pass that a Man who approves himself to his own Reason and Conscience, and, as near as he can, to the Mind of that Great God, who made and governs the World, should be tormented with panick Fears of he knows not what; since, whether he looks upward or downward, into himself or Abroad; there is nothing can

hurt him: Nothing but what must needs cheer him with an hopeful Expectation of a good Issue in the Upshot of Things; especially if he have a firm Belief of eternal Life in another World, and of unspeakable Joy and Felicity there, and certainly to be enjoyed by him that pursues it, by a Course of Virtue and Piety. How can you imagine that such a Man should be able to smother such Hopes, and conceal such Joys? No, they are too great to be kept secret in his Bosom; they will break out now and then in triumphant Expressions.

**ETERNITY**, *Brophitus*, (eternal Life, I mean) is so great, so glorious, so admirable an Happiness, that I can never be persuaded that Man really believes it, and hath good Hope that he shall attain it, who can be so reserved and stoical, as to keep his Countenance whenever he thinks of it.

Do but judge with yourself, if you could have Ground to believe you should never forego this present Life, but for ever enjoy your House, your Wife and Children, nor ever be parted from those Friends you have made Choice of; that no Accident, no Disease, nor Malice of Men or evil Spirits could reach you; but you might pursue your Designs, and meet with nothing to interrupt the Train of your Thoughts and Projections; in this Case you may easily imagine how much at Ease a Man's Thoughts would be, how secure his Mind, how bold his Spirit, and how chearful his Countenance. But now to live for ever in the Glories of the Kingdom of Heaven, to be not only secure from all Pain or Care, Fear or Danger, but to be in the Possession of perfect Bliss, to enjoy the Favour of God, the Presence of the ever-blessed *Jesus*, and the perpetual Society of all good Men made perfect and free from their Ignorances, Errors, Passions,

sions and Infirmities : This is a State of Life that I cannot think of without Astonishment, nor speak of without Passion, nor hope for without Rapture.

*Bioph.* I SHOULD easily consent to you in all this, *Sebastian*, if I thought it was real ; but in Truth I suspect all these Things you talk of, to be but pleasant Dreams, and high Rants of Fancy.

*Sebast.* BUT why should you think so, *Biophilus*, seeing it is very plain, that the soberest and best Men are of this Persuasion ; and for the most Part, the better the Men are, the more lively is their Sense of these Things. Can you imagine that either Almighty GOD should put a Cheat upon the best of Mankind (and upon them especially ? ) Or can you think, that the best of Men should be the greatest Liars, and pretend to that of which they had no real Grounds ? I pray therefore be free with me, and tell me the Causes of your Mistrust in this Case.

*Bioph.* I THINK I have Reason to doubt these high Pretences to the wonderful Comforts of Religion ; in the first Place, because I observe the State of Mankind to be generally very uneasy, and the World to be full of nothing more than Melancholy and Complaint ; which sure could not be, if there were such effectual Remedies ready at Hand, and such an Hearts-Ease in Religion.

*Sebast.* I WILL answer that presently, but I pray first tell me (by the Way) what do you think is the Reason there are so many sickly People in the World ?

*Bioph.* TRULY I think we may resolve the greatest Part of those tedious Distempers, under which



so many People languish, into Surfeits and other Instances of their own Riot and Luxury.

*Sebast.* VERY well: But do you not think there are a great many amongst those that pine away under these lingring Distempers, who might possibly receive Help and Ease, if they took due Care of themselves?

*Bioph.* YES doubtless, for in those chronical Diseases there is Time for Advice and Application, and fit Intermittions for Medicines to take Place in; but the Mischief is, some Men are humourfome and obstinate, and will take no Advice whatever comes of it: Others deliver themselves up to Empiricks and unskilful Persons, who often make the Disease worse than it was; and there are some so soft and delicate, that although they have good Advice given them, will not follow the Rules that are prescribed to them.

*Sebast.* VERY good; now you have answered your own Objection against the Comfortableness of Religion: For there are the same three Accounts to be assigned of the Uncomfortableness of Mens Spirits, which you have given of the sickly State of their Bodies, viz.

IN the first Place, there are some Men who fancy themselves either too wise to be advised, or think the Case of human Nature too desperate to be cured; and therefore grow morose and sceptical, and will rather cloak themselves up in a melancholy Reserve for the present, and run the Venture of all for the future, than give themselves the Trouble of any serious Thoughts of Religion. Now you cannot expect that these Men should find the Comfort of Religion, who are so far from making Experiment  
of

of it, that they are afraid of it, like those wise Men that for Fear they should one Time or other be poisoned, will never eat any Meat.

*Bioph.* If you would pardon my interrupting you, I could tell you for all this, that there are some Men in the World (though not many I confess) who enjoy themselves very well, and yet never were in Debt to Religion for it.

*Sebast.* VERY likely, *Biophilus*; for so (as I remember) King *John* killed a fat Stag that had never heard Mass in its Life; and so you shall see an Ox in the Stall, let him but have Meat and Drink, and Ease enough, he never repines at the Approach of the Day of Slaughter: In like Manner there are a Sort of dull unthinking Men that pass away their Time in a pleasant Dream of Sensuality, and never feel any Want of the Consolations of Religion; but it is not because there is no Need of them, but because such Persons do not feel the Need, nor indeed are sensible of any Thing else that is manly and generous.

If I should tell you it was dangerous being upon such a Precipice, I suppose you would not think it a Confutation of my Caution to tell me, that notwithstanding a certain blind Man slept and snored securely upon it; for real Danger is Danger, whether Men be apprehensive of it or no.

*Bioph.* YOUR Pardon again; it is not only true that some stupid Persons are at Ease without Religion, but you shall observe some of a better Mould, polite and ingenious Men, live very pleasantly, and yet are not beholden to Religion for it.

*Sebast.*

*Sebast.* It may be so; but then I doubt they must be beholden to the Bottle for it, which they must ply continually too, to keep them from thinking; for I have shewed you already, that it is as impossible for a thinking Man (out of a Debauch, and who cannot but be sensible that he must die) to be comfortable without the Aids of some Religion or other; as it is for you or me to caper and frolick upon the Brink of a Precipice. In short, such Men, as have Eyes in their Heads have no other Refuge but to wink hard, that they may not be sensible of their Danger.

AND so much for that: Now if you please I will proceed. In the second Place there is (as you well observed) another Sort of Men, who though they are not so refractory and contumacious as to defy the whole Art of Physick, (as a perfect Cheat) yet will apply themselves only to Quacks and Mountebanks, who instead of curing the present Infirmities, by unskilful Management render them more dangerous and intolerable. So it is in Religion, there are those who do not abandon themselves to desperate Atheism, nor cast off all Care of Religion, but find they cannot be at Ease without some Provision for another World; yet (not falling into the Hands of those that were able to principle them right) they entertain such imperfect and inconsistent Notions of Religion, as can afford them no solid Consolation. And this is a second Cause why the World is so uncomfortable, notwithstanding all the Relief that Religion may give.

As for Example: Suppose a Man believes there is a God, yet if he look upon Him under the Notion of a cruel and unrelenting Tyrant, governed by mere Will, and who aims at nothing but the securing



securing and greatening his own Power, and consequently is so far unconcerned for any of his Creatures, that it is all one to Him whether they be saved or damned eternally; you will easily grant, that the Belief of such a GOD cannot be very comfortable, since a Man cannot think of Him, nor much less exercise any Act of Devotion towards Him without Horror and Affrightment.

OR again, suppose a Man should entertain a more kindly Notion of GOD, but yet find himself perfectly at a Loss how to please the Divine Majesty, in Regard he knows of no Declaration of his Will that He hath made, (because he either never heard of, or doth not believe the Holy Scriptures) it is impossible but a devout Mind in this Case must be very much perplexed and uneasy; and the more devout the Man is, the more will his Perplexity be, in Regard that when he hath done all he can to please GOD, he cannot rest satisfied, whether he hath served or diserved Him all the while; which in a great Measure was the Condition of the Gentile World, for Lack of Divine Revelation; and therefore they were necessitated in their Devotions to make Use of Abundance of various Rites in Hopes that if one Sort of them missed, the other might hit to be acceptable to the Deity. And when all was done, they were not sure that either, or any of them, was agreeable to his Mind: Therefore their Devotion must needs be attended with panick Fears and uncomfortable Apprehensions.

FARTHER, let us suppose a Man had some Intimations of the Divine Will, as to Matter of Fact, but yet was under a Dispensation which (at least in the Letter of it) consisted mainly of nice and curious Observances; such as the abstaining from

from such or such Meats; the performing such or such Rites and Ceremonies; (which was the Case of the superstitious *Jews*, as it is also of a Sort of degenerate Christians) now it is plain that this State of Religion must needs be very uncomfortable also; because a Man must of Necessity drag on heavily where his Reason doth not go before him, and his Judgement is not convinced of the Goodness and Excellency of those Observances, as well as the Necessity of them.

SUCH Principles of Religion as any of the aforementioned, must needs be very uncomfortable, but all these, *Biophilus*, are as manifestly False, as they are sadly melancholy, and therefore it is not any Defect in Religion that the Spirits of Men are uncomfortable, but the Fault of those bad Notions they have taken up, instead of the true Principles of Religion. And so much for that second Sort of Men.

*Bioph.* I AM wonderfully pleased with this last Discourse of yours, in which you have not more demonstrated the Uncomfortableness, than exposed the Absurdity of a great Number of Religionists. I must tell you, it makes as much against yourself as any of them, so far as concerns the Point in Hand. For after all it is undeniable, that some Men of very different Persuasions, are as chearful in their several Ways one as the other: Now forasmuch as these cannot all be true, in Regard they contradict each other, doth it not follow, that the Comfortableness of Mens Spirits doth not depend merely upon Religion, but upon something else.

*Sebast.* IN Truth you follow me very close, yet I have two or three Things to say, which I do not doubt will acquit me in what I have said, and hope

hope may satisfy you. First, it is to be considered, that a Man may be sound in his Principles of Religion, and right for the main, who yet may differ from other Men, and perhaps from the Truth too, so much as to make him be reputed of a different Religion; yet notwithstanding those great Principles which he is sound in, and that honest Zeal he shews in the Prosecution of them, will enable him to live very comfortably; for fervent Devotion will cover a Multitude of Errors as well as *Charity doth a Multitude of Sins*. And this it is to be hoped is the Condition of a great many well-meaning, but deluded People.

AGAIN, Secondly, It is observable in this Case, that many warm themselves by *Sparks of their own kindling*, and are heated more by their own Motion than by the Grounds and Causes of it: Zeal warms the Blood, and whatsoever warms in some Measure comforts too; insomuch that some Men of such Opinions, as in the Consequences of them tend to Hell, are yet raised up to Heaven by the Power of an heated Fancy.

BUT, after all, you must remember (what I said before) that Truth is Truth, and Dream is Dream, my Meaning is the Man of a mighty Zeal in his Way, may please himself (whatever his Principles be) but it is only the Man of sound Principles of Religion, that can be truly, and understandingly, and constantly comfortable.

AND now I suppose I may come to the third and last Sort of Men which disparage Religion (just as an unruly Patient discredits his Physician) namely, those who tho' they have right Notions of Religion yet live carelessly, and are by no Means answerable



able to their Principles in the Conduct of their Lives.

Now it can be no Wonder, nor any Slander to Religion, that such Men who live wickedly should be uncomfortable in their Spirits. For we may as well expect, to warm ourselves by a Glow-worm, or a painted Fire, as that any Man's Heart should be truly chearful by the Advantage of a Religion which consists only in Notion. Nay, it would be a Wonder if such a Man should not be often melancholy, as lying under the Lashes of his own Conscience. And this is so far from reflecting any Dishonour upon Religion, that it is a mighty Vindication of the Truth and Power of it, when a Man's own Heart shall revenge upon him his Contempt of her Dictates and Sentiments.

BUT now, take a Man who to right Principles joins an holy Life, and (as there is all the Reason in the World for it, so) it is a thousand to one but he lives comfortably. And thus I think I have fully acquitted myself of your prime Objection against the Comfortableness of Religion.

*Bioph.* I CONFESS, *Sebastian*, you have spoke a great deal of Reason, but yet perhaps you are not so clearly come off as you imagine, for I have still to object, that many Men of your Principles and who carry it sometimes with full Sail of Joy and Courage, yet at other Times are not able to maintain this Tide, but flag, and are as much down as other Men; nay, do you not observe that there are Men in the World, whose Principles I know you will allow, and withall whose Lives you cannot blame, and yet these very Men shall be remarkably uncomfortable, and no Men fuller of Complaints than they. Therefore it seems Reli-  
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gion is neither such a stable Principle of Comfort, nor such a general Remedy of the Troubles of Life, as is pretended: If you can reconcile this with your former Assertions, I shall then be forced to yield you the Cause.

*Sebast.* IT is true that sometimes those who seem to have all the Advantages of Religion, are notwithstanding uncomfortable under them, and yet this may be no Impeachment either of the Truth, or of the Efficacy of those Principles. For this may come to pass upon several other Accounts, as, namely,

IN the first Place, it may be that he, in whose Life we can observe no Blemish, may notwithstanding be justly charged by his own Conscience for several such Miscarriages as may well make him uneasy, 'till he hath made his Peace with God and himself again. Now you must not impute this to the Defect of Consolation in Religion, but to the Man's own Defect of Piety. For whensoever we see a Man troubled for violating the Rules of his Religion, we have a Kind of sensible Experiment of the great Reality and mighty Power of it; and this may happen, tho' you see not the Causes of it.

AGAIN, It may be the Person who now lives very virtuously, hath formerly been a great Sinner: And now, though he hath made his Peace with God, and so there is nothing justly to interrupt his Comfort; yet as often as he reflects upon the Heinousness of his former Miscarriages, no Wonder if the Briskness of his Spirit be abated, if it be but by the Consideration of the Danger he hath escaped.

AGAIN, it may happen that he who is not conscious to himself of any Guilt which should deject his Confidence towards GOD, yet by the malicious Artifice of the great Enemy of Mankind, may have such frightful Fancies raised in his Head, as may much discompose him for the present, 'till by Prayer and the Grace of GOD he overcomes them.

MOREOVER sometimes, when all is well within, and a Man's own Heart doth not accuse him, yet it may happen that outward Afflictions may be so sharp that for a Time even a good Man's Spirits may be disordered, 'till he recollect himself, and Sampson-like, *shake off those Philistines that are upon him*; I mean, untill he rally the Forces of his Reason, or rather 'till by Faith he take Sanctuary in the impregnable Fortrefs of Religion, and there be securely weathers out the Storm, and all becomes serene and calm again.

BUT after all, Allowance must still be made for an unhappy Temper of Body; for it must be remembered, that Religion is a Medicine for the Soul, and not for bodily Diseases. You know the intimate Correspondence between those two Inmates, Soul and Body, which is such, that like *Hypocrates's* Twins, one of them cannot well enjoy itself, if the other be in Disorder. Do but consider how exceeding difficult it is to maintain the Rate of a Man's common Conversation, when the Body is but a little sickly and discomposed. And then how can you imagine but that there will be an Unevenness of Temper in a melancholy Man's Deportment, notwithstanding that the Comforts of Religion should be as solid and stable as I have represented them to be?



*Bioph.* BUT by your Leave, Sir, I understood you that there was such a Catholick Antidote of all Sorrow to be found in Religion, that your pious Man could never have been sad any more; neither outward Accidents could discompose him, nor bodily Infirmities interrupt his Enjoyments.

*Sebast.* SURE, *Biophilus*, you did not think I took every good Man to become a God, or the Powers of Religion to be so omnipotent, as that because they can recreate a Man's Spirits, they should therefore make him entirely another Creature. You might as well imagine I asserted that this spiritual Remedy should preserve Men from dying, as from being sick or melancholy, when their Constitution is prone to it. For although by Reason of the near Relation between Soul and Body, it is not to be doubted but the Comforts of the Mind may, in a good Measure, cheer the bodily Spirits; yet on the other Side, it is to be expected that the Body will have its Influence reciprocally; and when it is infirm, will depress and clog the Mind that it shall be sensible of the Burthen, and move the less briskly in its Course. In short, the Business between the Soul and Body stands thus; as on the one Hand, the Body can affect the Mind so far as to retard its Motion, and check its Flight; but not so as altogether to hinder them: On the other Hand, the Mind (if that be comfortable) comforts and refreshes the bodily Spirits, but is not able entirely to alter them; For Temper will be Temper, and Melancholy will be Melancholy still.

THAT therefore which I assert and which the common Experience of pious Men attests, is this, That there are never-failing Springs of Consolation in Religion, provided the Issues of them be not

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obstructed

obstructed by some or other of the aforesaid Occasions.

*Phil.* THERE is one Thing runs in my Thoughts, concerning which I would gladly ask your Opinion.

I HAVE observed several Divines, amongst the Causes of Perplexity and Uncomfortableness of good Men, to reckon one, of which you have hitherto taken no Notice; namely, *the Case of Desertion*, which they define to be “When GOD withdraws  
“Himself arbitrarily from such Persons for a Time,  
“and hides his Face from them upon the sole Account of his Prerogative, or some Reason best  
“known to Himself, but without the least Guilt  
“or Provocation on their Parts.” Now if this be true, it may then not only happen that the very best, and also the most chearful Men naturally may be very uncomfortable; but the very State of spiritual Comfort will be very uncertain and fluctuating; and which is worst of all, there will be a Disease without a Remedy, a Case that admits of no Consolation. For what can all Counsels and Discourses, or all the Exercises of Faith or Reason avail against a peremptory Act of GOD?

*Sebast.* It is very true, *Philander*, as you observe, there hath been such a Notion broached, and the Effects and Consequences have been bad enough; for besides what you have alledged, under the Pretence hereof, some have been so abused as to indulge their own Humour, and, as *Jonas* said, *he did well to be angry*, so they fancy they ought to be melancholy, when GOD (as they imagine) sets Himself against them, and they thereby are tempted to think hardly of the Divine Majesty, as if He was a great Tyrant, who took Pleasure in the

the Complaints of his Creatures; and which is worse than that (if worse can be) sometimes evil Men get this Notion by the End, and then whenever their wicked Lives render their Consciences uneasy to them, they presently conceit it may be only the Withdrawing of the Divine Favour from them, and how can they help it, since it is the Case of good Men to be so dealt with?

BUT what Ground there is for this I cannot imagine. It is true, we ought not to dispute the Divine Prerogative, or what He may do if He pleases. For we find it dangerous to take upon us to limit the Prerogative of earthly Princes; and if they may have Reasons for such Things as we do not understand, much more hath God, whose Wisdom is infinite and unsearchable: Therefore not to define what God may or may not do, it is plain that there is no Foundation in Holy Scripture (which is the Declaration of his Will) to think He will take such a Course as this; and besides, it seems inconsistent with his Sincerity and Goodness, and can by no Means be reconciled with that settled and immoveable Delight He declares Himself to take in good Men, that He should play fast and loose with them, or (as some have rudely express'd it) play at Bo-peep with his Children.

No, *Philander*, assure yourself, infinite Goodness will not disguise itself, and put on a frightful Vizard merely to scare his weak Children; so far from it, that contrariwise so long as Men continue constant, loyal and dutiful towards Him, He will be unchangeable in his Favour, and constantly shine out upon them in the bright Beams of Love and Kindness. And if it shall happen that the Melancholy of Mens Constitution shall rise up in such black Fumes, as not only to cloud their Minds,



but that (consequently thereof) they may entertain dismal Apprehensions of Him; yet He is ready to assist and comfort them by his Holy Spirit, if He be devoutly applied to: But to be sure He will never exasperate the Condition of a sincerely good Man by any unprovoked Act of his own. He hath told us, *He will not break a bruised Reed, nor quench smoking Flax*, Matt. xii. 20. And that if *Men draw nigh to Him, He will draw nigh to them*, James iv. 8. And He neither needs it, nor is inclined to try Experiments upon poor melancholy Men. Let us have a Care therefore of charging the Effects of our own changeable Humour (either of Body and Mind) upon the unchangeable God. For so long as we walk by the Light of his Word, we may live under the Light of his Countenance, if (at least) our own Melancholy interpose not, and eclipse it to us: And we may upon those Terms, in a good Measure enjoy Heaven upon Earth; we may be as bold as Lions, as chearful as Angels; in a Word, as full of Joy as our Hearts can hold: For the Principles of Religion will bear all this out, and God will never interrupt the Efficacy of them.

*Phil.* OH blessed! for ever blessed be the Divine Goodness, and God's Blessing on your Heart, *Sebastian*, for the good Report and Assurance you have given us of it. And now, Friends, why should we not be comfortable?

HAVE we not a GOD, who is a just and a faithful Creator, a wise and benign Being, that is tender of, and exorable towards his Creatures: How then can we chuse but love Him, and delight in Him?

HATH not his Divine Majesty made his Mind so well known to us, that we cannot be to seek what will please Him, but may go on chearfully in the Course.

Course of our Duty without Distrust or Scruple? And can we doubt his Constancy to Himself, and to that Declaration He hath made of his Will, that we should suspect the End if we use the Means; since we may read our own Destiny before-hand, and anticipate the Sentence of the great Day? Are not all his Laws so just and rational, that they agree with the very Sense of our own Mind, so that *his Service is perfect Freedom*? Forasmuch as in a proper Sense we are governed by our own Laws, those of the Gospel being enacted in our own Consciences.

AND are we not satisfied that we shall be so far from losing our Labour in Religion, that we have the fullest Assurance that in Reward of faithful serving GOD in this Life, we shall after Death be raised up again, and live for ever and ever with Him in his Kingdom of Heaven? Surely all this together is sufficient to make us fervent and hearty in the Exercise of Religion, and comfortable in our Spirits.

*Sebast.* I ADD to what you have said, why should we be afraid to be alone, or in the Dark, since we believe GOD is every where, and in the greatest Solitude will afford us the comfortable Effects of his Presence and Providence? Or why should we be under dreadful Apprehensions of the Power of evil Spirits upon us, seeing we are convinced *that greater is He that is with us, than he that is in the World?*

WHY should we be dejected at worldly Losses, when we know that *in Heaven we have a more enduring Substance.*

WHY.

WHY should we be dismay'd at the Infliction of any Pain upon our Bodies, either by the Hand of God in a violent Disease, or by the Cruelty of Men: Since God hath promised *that no Temptation shall overtake us, but what we shall be able to bear?* That is, He both can, and will either abate the Torments, or support us under them.

IN a Word, what need we be afraid of Death itself, since *it cannot kill the Soul*, and is no more but only a dark Passage to a Kingdom of Light and Glory——

*Bioph.* You talk bravely, Gentlemen, but I protest I am amazed at you, for to this very Day I never looked upon Religion as any other than an austere and melancholy Course of Life, and the most undesirable Thing in the whole World.

*Phil.* For God's Sake then, *Biophilus*, what is comfortable, if Religion be melancholy? Is the World so very comfortable, when you know it is full of nothing but Care and Folly, Vexation and Disappointment! Is Sin so comfortable, which (after the Commission of it) perpetually dogs a Man with Guilt, and ordinarily disorders his Fortunes, impairs his Health, and crows and debases his Spirit? Or is Death so comfortable a Thing, which represents to a Man nothing but an horrible Pit of Darkness, and the Land of Oblivion?

WHAT (I say) can be comfortable, if that be not so, which is the only Remedy against all the former? For it is plain that nothing but the Hopes of better World at last can enable a Man to enjoy himself tolerably in this present; and nothing but eternal Life is a sufficient Antidote against the Fears of Death: And all these are the Effects and Benefits.



Benefits of Religion. Therefore if this be uncomfortable, Mankind must needs be the most unhappy Being in the whole World. For tho' other Creatures are in some Sort Fellow-sufferers in the common Calamity of this World; yet besides that their Share is ordinarily not so great as his, it is evident that they fear nothing for the future, but only feel the present Evil, and they have no Restraint upon them from what they desire, nor no Remorse for what they have done; therefore if Mankind have not the Glory of his Conscience when he doth well, to set against the Checks of it when he doth amiss; and if he have not Hopes to counterbalance his Fears, and a Reward hereafter for his Self-denial at present, his Condition is far the worst of any Creature in the World. Therefore, as I said, Religion is the peculiar Concern and singular Advantage, as that which only can repair all his Misfortunes.

*S. bast.* BUT I pray, *Biophilus*, what do you apprehend in Religion, that can make it look so melancholy to you? Is it because it sets a GOD before you, than which nothing can be more desirable? For GOD is Love, is rich in Goodness, nay Goodness itself; insomuch that if it were possible any Thing in the Universe should be more good than He, that would be GOD. He made Man, preserves him, loves him, delights in him, designs him to live eternally with Himself. In a Word, all imaginable Comfort is so wrapped up in this one Word GOD, that I remember a brave Heathen said, *He would not be willing to live a Day in the World, if he thought there was not a GOD in it.*

It may be, you will say, this GOD is just and holy, and jealous of his Honour, and will revenge Himself upon stubborn and incorrigible Sinners;  
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all this is true, but what need you be one of those that provoke Him, and then, the juster and holier He is, the better and more comfortable it is for you; or if you have offended Him heretofore, yet if you repent and turn to Him, He is so exorable and pitiful, that no tender Parent hath more yearning Bowels, or more open Arms to receive his Prodigal and lost Son, returning Home to him, than GOD hath towards penitent Sinners.

WILL you object the Self-denials required by Religion, as that a Man must restrain himself of many Things that are pleasant to Flesh and Blood? It is true there are such Things required, but they are not so many as that a Man may not live very pleasantly notwithstanding; and if they were more than they are, who would not comply with them to obtain the Favour of such a GOD, and to gain eternal Life?

I AM sure you cannot object against the direct and positive Duties of Religion, such as Prayers and Praises to GOD, reading and meditating on his Word, or Acts of Beneficence and Charity towards Mankind; for there is nothing more pleasant, nothing more delicious than these, if they be rightly understood. So that in short, it is no better than a mere Slander to call Religion uncomfortable, and such as could proceed from nothing but the Devil himself; or if from Men, it must be such as had never tried it, nor were resolved ever to do so.

*Bioph.* You must pardon me, Gentlemen, I tell you plainly I never felt any of these Comforts of Religion which you speak of.

*Phil.*

*Phil.* AY, there is the Business, now you have said all. Here lies the Bottom of all the scandalous Reports of Religion, as if it was a sour, melancholy Thing. Try it, *Biophilus*, and you will quickly confute yourself, Experience will do it for you: You used to say Seeing is Believing; now in GOD's Name make Experiment, *Taste and see how good the LORD is*; and let me tell you this for your Encouragement, there were never yet any who effectually made the Experiment and were disappointed

*Bioph.* BUT, for GOD's Sake, what do you mean by trying? What would you have me to do? I should be very glad to live comfortably.

*Phil.* BY trying we mean no more but this: Apply yourself in Earnest to the Knowledge and Practice of Religion, the very first Step to which is Gravity and Seriousness of Spirit. It was, I remember, the short and weighty Counsel of the great *Hugo Grotius*, when he lay on his Death-bed, to some about him, who asked his Advice; be serious, said he, and your Work is half done; do not please yourself in a trifling Pretence to extraordinary Sagacity in finding Flaws in so weighty a Concern as this but be willing to believe, and then, resolve to live up to the Convictions of your Conscience, and you will find the Comfort of so doing.

*Sebast.* As soon as you set your Face towards Heaven, you shall find your Mind easy, and your Spirits cheared with an admirable Serenity; and when in Consequence of such Beginning, you worship GOD devoutly, you will find a Comfort in his Presence, and a sweet Sense of Him: Then you will feel a Power in your Mind, to resist all Kind  
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of Sin, and that will be followed with an unspeakable Pleasure in Victory over your Passions, and corrupt Inclinations, and thence forward you shall be able to look towards the other World with Hope and Desire: And then finally the Holy Spirit will come into your-Soul, and *seal you to the Day of Redemption*, and give you such a Relish of the Glories above, that you shall despise the present World, and be able to look through the dark Vault of Death, and take a View of Heaven.

*Bioph.* BUT I pray what Religion must a Man be of, that he may make this Experiment.

*Sebast.* NAY, sure enough it must be the old Religion; or you will lose your Labour. The Way to Peace of Conscience and spiritual Joy, is not to be of such an Opinion, Sect, or Party; or to be zealous of such a Mode or Ceremony; but to have a firm Faith in GOD, to live an holy and devout Life; this is the old Religion truly so called, for it is as old as Gospel itself, and consequently is the tried Way to solid Consolation. But, I pray, upon this Occasion, give me Leave to ask you a bold Question, What Religion are you of at present?

*Bioph.* IT is a free Question, I confess; but (knowing whom I am amongst) I will give you as free an Answer: Truly, *Sebastian*, I am of no Religion at all that I know of, unless you make me to be of one.

*Phil.* THEN I do not wonder that you are such a Stranger to the Comforts of Religion, for it seems all was Romance to you but I hope, however, you do not look upon it as a Piece of Gallantry to be without Religion; take Heed of that; *for GOD will not be mocked.*

*Bioph.*

*Bioph.* You see I do not, *Philander*; but I know on the other Side, you would not have me dissemble and play the Hypocrite neither, and therefore I have told you the very Truth.

*Sebast.* I PRAY give me Leave to enquire how you came to be in this Condition? I am confident you have not drowned your Religion in Drink, (as some have done) for I take you to be a wiser Man, and more careful of your Life and Health; and I am as confident that you have not carelessly lost it in your Travels in foreign Countries, as some young Gentlemen have done. What then! hath the Hypocrisy of some high Pretenders made you ashamed of it, or (which hath been very common in this Age) have you run a wild Round through all Opinions, 'till at last, being come to the Point you set out from, you concluded, according to the Proverb, *As good never a whit as never the better!*

*Bioph.* You can never find what was never lost; nor can I have lost what I never had. I tell you again, I neither have, nor never had any Religion that I know of.

*Phil.* You might have spared those last Words, for I will undertake for you, you have no Religion indeed, if you do not know of it. Religion is not like a Disease, to be caught before we are aware, nor can it be imposed upon us without our Consent and Privity: Besides it is so active a Principle, that it will discover itself, and a Man may as well carry Fire in his Bosom and not be burnt, as carry Religion in his Heart and not be sensible of it.

*Sebast.* You increase my Wonder; I am at a Loss how this could come to pass: Did you grow,

like a Mushroom out of the Earth? Or what was the Manner of your Education?

*Bioph.* My Birth, *Sebastian*, was, I suppose like other Men's, but perhaps my Breeding might have something peculiar in it. For amongst other Things that happened to me, it fell out that one of those Persons who should especially have taken Care of my Institution, was of the Opinion, that the Spirit of God (as his Phrase was) must immediately and by Himself effect all the Good that is in any Man; and therefore he concluded it would not only be lost Labour, but a Derogation from the Grace of God, to make Use of any Means, or to be much concerned about my Education. And then, for the rest of them to whom I was committed in my Minority, they were great Politicians, and pretended they should consult my Interest most by keeping me disengaged from any Party in Religion, that so I might be always at Liberty to join myself with that which should prove most to my temporal Advantage.

*Sebast.* HERE was a Beginning bad enough, I confess; but when you grew a Man, and became at your own Dispose, what kept you unresolved in this great Affair?

*Bioph.* My setting out in the World fell about the late Times of publick Distraction, and then I observed there were so many Religions, that it was not easy to resolve which to chuse.

*Sebast.* NAY, *Biophilus*, there you was wanting to yourself, as much as your Guardians had been wanting to you before; for the more Disputes concerning Religion there are in the World, it is the greater Probability that there is at least some general



general Truths amongst them, tho' many of the Particulars must needs be mistaken: Besides, if you had considered that Matter diligently, you would have found that few or none of those Disputes were about the Fundamentals of Religion, but only about certain Notions or Modes and Forms; and you might have abstracted from them and been a good Christian nevertheless.

*Bioph.* IT may be so, and, I confess, I had sometimes such Thoughts; but then whenever I began to look that Way, there were those brisk young Men about me, who, observing me to grow a little serious, would preach to me at this Rate: What, *Biophilus*, do you grow weary of your Liberty? Do you not know there are Bonds in Religion, as well as in Matrimony? Are you not aware how it restrains the Pleasures of Life, and damps all Jollity? If once you let loose that Thing called Conscience, it will cost you a great deal of Art and Pains to hamper it again. Do but observe (say they) that whensoever any Man comes under the Power of Religion, it abates his Courage and renders him tame and sheepish, liable to be affronted by every Body. In a Word, said they, all that they call the Fear of God, and Concern for another World, is nothing but Ignorance, Pedantry, or Hypocrisy.

*Phil.* WHAT Pity it is that such Men as you speak of were not condemned to wear Fools Coats, or that they have not some Mark set upon them, that Men might avoid them as Lepers, or Men infected with some such loathsome and contagious Disease.

*Sebast.* BIOPHILUS speaks like a Man of Sense and Ingenuity, and give me Leave to say, Sir, I

cannot tell whether I ought more to applaud the Sagacity of your Mind, or to deplore the Unhappiness of your Education and Acquaintance; it is a thousand Pities the former should lie under the fatal Prejudices of the latter : And I should account nothing to have befallen me in my whole Life more desirable, than an Opportunity of rescuing such a Temper from such a Calamity. But, I pray, with the same Ingenuity, tell me, have you gone away currently with this Unconcernedness for Religion? Have you not sometimes had Conflicts within yourself?

*Bioph.* I CONFESS I have; for sometimes, whereas I could not but observe this Business Religion to be the great Theme of the World, I mean to be that which the Generality of Mankind are solicitous about; surely (thought I) these Men believe themselves, and then why should I make the Adventure alone? It may become me in Prudence to have some Concern about it too; especially when I considered that I must shortly die, and it was impossible for me to be certain what might or might not come afterwards, and what strange Revolutions might succeed my going off the Stage of this World, within the Compass of that vast Tract of Time which I was likely to leave behind me. Hereupon methought it became me in Discretion to provide for the worst. To all which I must add, That I have at several Times had unaccountable Mis-givings of Heart which not a little startled me for the present; but then I endeavoured to check them as the Effects of Melancholy and mere Panick Fears; notwithstanding, in Spight of my Heart, they would return upon me, and gave me Suspicion that they might have some other Ground than I was aware of.

*Sebast.*

*Sebast.* WELL, and would not these Things prevail upon you to a serious Consideration of Religion?

*Bioph.* No truly, they did not, for I had other Thoughts came into my Mind, which seemed to counter-balance the former; I suspected my Suspicions, and fell in Doubt whether those odd Kind of Bodings and Presages of my own Mind, which I told you of, concerning God and a future State, might not proceed from the mere Weakness of human Nature; or from Ignorance, Melancholy, or natural Superstition, without any just and reasonable Foundation. And then as for those Apprehensions of Religion, which I observed to be generally in other Men, I suspected the Arts of Politicians, who might have design to cheat others into those Persuasions which they had no Sense of themselves. Upon such Considerations as these, I was inclined on the other Side, not to give myself any Trouble about what seemed so dark and uncertain.

*Sebast.* I PITY you with all my Heart, *Biophilus*, and yet my Wonder is almost equal to my Pity, that a Man of your Sagacity should be stagger'd by such groundless Fancies; for in the first Place, you cannot but have observed that many of the shrewdest Men in the World, are as much under an awful Sense of Religion, as the most easy and injudicious. Nay, ordinarily, the more thoroughly learned and wise any Men are, the more hearty they are in this Affair. From whence you cannot (without doing Violence to your Discretion) but conclude, that Religion is far from being the mere Effect of Ignorance and Imposture; whatever some shatter-brain'd and debauch'd Per-



sons would fain persuade themselves and others.

AND then in the second Place, when you consider that the most courageous do as well take Sanctuary in Religion, and embrace it as ardently as the most cowardly; you will have no more Reason to impute the Rise of Piety to Pusillanimity, than you had before to charge it upon Folly and Ignorance, but must be forced to conclude this great Business to be more deeply founded, and to depend upon higher Causes.

*Bioph.* You say well, Sir, and I should be apt to think so too, if I could learn what those higher Causes are, and herein I would gladly have your Advice, who (as I am persuaded) have too great a Judgment to be led away with popular Errors. Tell me therefore, I beseech you, into what real Causes I ought to resolve, either those private Impressions of Religion I have found in myself, or those more publick Effects of it, which I have observed in others.

*Sebast.* PLAY the Man, *Biophilus*, and judge with yourself, into what Causes should you, or can you resolve such Effects, but those that are as real and substantial as the Effects themselves; namely, the plain Reasonableness of that Thing (called Religion) approving itself to the inward Sense of your own Mind, there is a natural Impression of Religion, which God hath left upon the Consciences of Men, which is, as it were, the internal Sense of the Soul: And then when the Reason reflects also upon this, weighing and estimating the Reasons for it, and the Objections against it, together with the Importance of the Thing, it pronounces

pronounces it the most necessary Concern of Mankind.

*Bioph.* BUT if you will make me your Disciple, I must entreat you to deal more particularly with me, and to open the Foundations of the Thing in Question. But I pray deal plainly and rationally with me, seeing otherwise if I should become your Convert, you will have but little Credit by me, since, in that Case, my Zeal would be without Knowledge. Therefore pray make me understand, that Religion is as reasonable in itself, as you have represented it to be important in its Consequences.

*Sebast.* I HAVE gone more than half Way in that already ; for having shewed you the Consequence of Religion to be such, that a Man can neither live nor die comfortably without it, there is all the Reason in the World for it. For he that proves a Thing to be necessary, does more than prove it to be real.

*Bioph.* THAT was a Side-blow, which I did not expect, I confess.

*Sebast.* BUT it is an Home-Thrust, for it obliges you as you are a Man, and pretend either to Prudence or Self-love, to apply yourself seriously to this Affair ; nay, if there should be wanting such other Proofs as you require, still you will acknowledge that Self-preservation is the first and surest Principle in Nature ; and sure that is good Proof, which proves that Man to be worse than a Fool who doth not follow it.

*Bioph.* THAT is Home indeed : But let me tell you, it is one of my greatest Prejudices against Religion, that the most zealous Defenders of it talk  
of

of probable Arguments, and prudential Considerations. Now, for my Part, I require direct Proofs, and nothing less will satisfy me.

*Sebast.* THERE is one Thing I would ask first, that you will be willing to believe Religion, if you see Reason for it.

*Bioph.* THAT is not an ingenuous Demand, *Sebastian*, if I understand you: For whilst you seem to ask my Consent, you plainly beg your Cause; whereas you are to prove it with that Evidence, as to make me believe it whether I will or no.

*Sebast.* THERE it is now, that makes the Necessity of my Demand apparent: For it is a mighty Mistake, *Biophilus*, to think that any Arguments whatsoever can be sufficient to make a Man believe whether he will or no. It is a Question whether Almighty God can make Man believe against his Will; indeed it seems a Contradiction to suppose it. He hath given Men Freedom of Will, and *put them in the Hand of their own Counsel, bid them choose Life or Death*: By which Means, as wise and good Men have the Comfort to co-operate towards their own Happiness; so perverse and obstinate Men have the Shame and Remorse of being guilty of their own Destruction. For when both Parties have Light to guide them, and Motives and Arguments to persuade them, the one ingenuously complies, but the other wilfully refuses, and employs the Prerogative of his Nature, both against God, and his own Soul.

BUT in an human Way it is plainly impossible: For if a Man have taken up his Post, which he resolves to maintain, it is not in the Power of Reason to remove him from it; the Will is immovable by  
any;



any Thing but itself, and Reason is no equal Match for it. Now this is the Case of a great Part of the Adversaries to Religion, and this is the main Disadvantage of its Cause, that such Men have no Mind it should be true; and then, *non persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris*; they will hold the Conclusion in Spite of the Premisses: And this is the Reason why I require of you to be willing to believe, before I begin my Argument; not that I require you should believe without Proof, but that you should not oppose Prejudice to my Argument, but be true to your Reason, and to the Evidence that shall be given.

*Bioph.* If that be all you mean, it is granted also; and now that you have done with your Cautions, before you enter upon the Business, I must ask one Thing of you, namely, that you will not be too prolix in your Arguments.

*Sebast.* INDEED, *Biophilus*, if I had thought of it, I ought to have cautioned against that very Thing which you now demand; for this is another capital Mistake in those Men that are Strangers to these Matters. They expect to jump into the full Understanding of Religion presently, whensoever they make it the Subject of their Discourse; and if it be not decided in one Syllogism or two, they immediately begin a Triumph. I confess to you, that GOD, out of Compassion to Mankind, hath discovered a short Cut over to the other World; I mean, a very compendious Way to a full Knowledge of, and Satisfaction in all the Mysteries of Religion, and that is by the Holy Scripture, which He devised on Purpose, because some Mens Capacities will not reach to a long Argument, and the Occasions and busy Life of others will not give them Leisure to attend the laborious Process of Reason. But as you reject that, and will not permit GOD  
to

to judge for you, but will be your own Judge in the Case; therefore you must have Patience in this Way of Probation you put me upon. For if a Man will take nothing for current Coin, but what he hath wrought out of the Ore himself, nor believe any Thing to be Truth but what he hath drawn out of the Depth by his own Skill and Strength, he must be content to take a great deal of Pains, and be at the Expence of a great deal of Time, before he can arrive at Satisfaction; however, I hope, you shall have no Occasion to accuse me of Tedi-ousness in this Argument.

*Bioph.* You speak Reason, I confess; and I yield you this together with all your other Preliminaries: Now therefore to the Business.

*Sebast.* KNOW then, *Biophilus*, (without any farther Preface) that all this great Fabrick of Religion stands upon these three Pillars, *viz.*

FIRST, That there is a God, as the Object of Devotion and religious Observance.

SECONDLY, That this God exercises a Providence over his Creatures, and Mankind especially; and so by observing how they carry themselves towards Him, and consequently being able to reward or punish them, lays an Obligation upon them to observe and worship Him.

THIRDLY, That Mankind is a Subject capable of such an Obligation, and of paying such Devotion and Observance to the Deity.

MISTAKE me not, I say, upon all these three in Conjunction doth the Truth and Reason of Religion depend; but if any one of them were wanting,

ing, Religion would vanish into a Romance, and come to nothing.

FOR, first, if there was no GOD, it would not only be certain that there is nothing to whom Religion could be due, but it would be as certain that there could be no Providence, nor other Consideration, to enforce it; and then let the Constitution of Mankind be as capable of noble Performances as can be imagined, yet there could be no Ground nor Foundation of Religion.

AGAIN, if we should acknowledge the Being of a GOD, and Him also fit to be worshipped; yet if there be no Providence, so that this GOD doth not mind whether Men serve or disserve Him, and consequently could not reward or punish accordingly, though it might be fancied a decent Thing for all Creatures to pay some Kind of Homage to so excellent a Being, yet there can be no Danger to them if they do not, so consequently no sufficient Obligation upon them to perform it.

AND lastly, if there be both a GOD and a Providence acknowledged, and consequently an Obligation to Religion; yet if Man be not a Subject capable of it, that is, if either he hath it not in his Power to know GOD's Will, or it is not in his Choice to serve or disserve Him; the Business of Religion cannot concern him, nor can it be expected from him.

BUT if all these three Things prove certainly true, then is Religion immovable as the Foundations of Heaven and Earth. For the first Proposition describes the Object, the third qualifies the Subject, and the second lays the Obligation of Religion,



Religion, which is all that can be required in the Case.

*Bioph.* THE Pinch of the Business therefore lies in the Proof of those three Assertions; and if you are able to make out the Truth of them severally, I must be a Profelyte, there is no Help for it. But the first I allow, that there is a GOD: Prove the second if you can.

*Sebast.* THAT there is a Providence, I doubt not to convince any considerate Man of, these two Ways, viz.

1. FROM the Causes and Reasons of it.
2. FROM the visible Effects of it.

IN the first Place, there is very great Reason to assure ones Self that GOD exercises a Providence over the World, from the Consideration of those Perfections, which appear to be in the Divine Nature, namely, infinite Wisdom and Power, both which we must necessarily ascribe to Him, whom we allow to be Creator of the World. Now there can be no Reason to doubt whether it be in his Power to look over and mind all the Passages of the World, when we have acknowledged his Power to have been sufficient to give Beginning to that which was not, and to make a World out of nothing, which is incomparably the more difficult Province.

AND then if we are satisfied that such a Providence is not impossible, the same Wisdom which joined with his Power in making the World, will oblige Him to exert Himself in the Management of it when He hath made it. For it is not conceivable that a wise Being should wholly abandon that Piece  
of

of Workmanship, which He hath made the greatest Demonstration of Art and Skill in the Contrivance of. Such a supine Negligence as this is not easily to be suspected in the meanest of intelligible Beings; and therefore there can be no Colour of Reason that the most perfect of Beings should be thought guilty of it.

THIS I take to be a sufficient Argument of a Providence between you and me, now that you acknowledge a God and Creator of the World; but I will not insist upon it, because I promised to give such Evidence of this Point, as should at the same Time (and *à majori*, as they say) conclude the former Principle also; I mean that there is a God.

AND therefore I shall now come to the second Way of Probation, *viz.* from the visible Effects of a Providence, but (you remember) I have already prevented myself herein, by what passed between us in a former Conference, where I shewed, at large, the evident Footsteps of Providence in his managing or over-ruling the ordinary Course of Nature in two remarkable Instances, *viz.* 1. In the Prophecies and Predictions of Things to come, which have been so admirably verified in the Event, as must argue an all-seeing Eye over all the Motions of second Causes. And, 2. In the Miracles that have been wrought in the several Ages of the World, wherein the Divine Majesty hath apparently interposed, and either suspended or over-ruled, heighten'd or accelerated the Motion and Force of natural Causes, and by both together, given Proof of his Being, and of his minding the Affairs of the World.

I ASSURE myself I shall not need to repeat that Argument at large, but may trust your Memory

for it; only if now upon so long Consideration, you have any Thing material to object, I am ready to make good what I have asserted.

*Bioph.* I MUST needs say you deal fairly thus far; and now that I recollect the Sum of that Discourse of yours, I have, as I think, this very material Thing to say against it, namely, that we cannot observe any such Interpositions of Divine Providence now, but the World is left wholly to the Course of natural Causes. If you would have appealed either to Miracles or Prophecy in the present Age, so that a Man might have made his own Eyes Witnesses of Matter of Fact, then the Argument would have been irrefragable; but forasmuch as we see no such Things in the present Times, why should we be so credulous as to believe there ever were?

*Sebast.* I AM very sensible of the Importance of your Objection, and of the Necessity that a sufficient Answer be made to it; yet I do not, in the least, doubt but you will find it in the following Particulars, by that Time you have laid them together.

FIRST, I suppose you will grant, that there can be no Need of, or Reason for God's displaying Himself by Miracles, or a Spirit of Prophecy, in the present Age, for the Assurance of a Providence; if we may be sufficiently secured, that He hath indubitably given those Evidences in former Ages: For he that hath once sufficient Grounds given him to believe such a Point, hath always an Obligation upon him to believe it, without repeated Proofs. And it is unreasonable to expect that God should be bound to exert his Omnipotency, or any Way put out of Course the Order of natural Causes, merely for the Gratification of Mens Curiosity or  
Fancy,



Fancy, but only for the Satisfaction of their Reason in so important a Point.

SECONDLY, I will shew you, that (bating merely the gratifying of Curiosity and Fancy) we may have as credible and sufficient Assurance of a Miracle, or other extraordinary Passage of Providence, which was done many Ages ago, as we could have if such a Thing was to be done in the present Age. This will perhaps seem a little strange to you at first, but your Wonder will abate when you consider these two Things :

I. THAT it cannot be expected GOD should so far comply with the Humour of Men, as to work Miracles every Day, and in the Sight of every Man. Miracles are a Kind of Parenthesis in the ordinary Course of Nature, or, as it were, a short Digression from the usual Method of Things. Now, if such Digressions should be daily made, it would be, in a Manner, a total superseding the ordinary Course of Nature ; and so, instead of serving the particular Humour of some Men, the whole Race of Mankind would be deprived of a greater and more remarkable Miracle than all the other put together ; namely, that of the stable and constant Course of Nature. And such frequent Irregularities as must follow upon that Concession, would put a great Temptation upon Men to suspect that there was no constant Law in the Creation, but that Chance carried all before it ; which would make an Objection indeed against Providence. And yet it is certain, that notwithstanding this horrible Mischief, so it must be done, if every particular Man must have his Eyes Witnesses of Miracles before he believes them. For it is plain, that if GOD should vouchsafe one or more Miracles to the present Age, it could not be done before every Man ; and therefore some of

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them,

them, if they will believe a Providence upon that Account, must trust to other Mens Eyes for the Grounds of their Belief.

AND thus we see it was in those Times and Places where Miracles were most frequent, as in the Time of our Saviour; those mighty Works which He wrought whilst He was upon Earth, and even his Resurrection itself, were not obvious to the Eyes of all Men, but only to so many as might render them sufficiently credible by their Testimony; and as for the Generality, they must content themselves *to believe without Seeing*, *St. John* xx. 29. as He Himself told them.

2. IF GOD should so far condescend to the Incredulity of Men, as to permit generally their Eyes and Senses to be Witnesses of such extraordinary Passages of Providence as we speak of, it would not have such Success as you imagine; for there would not want Objections against this also. Some would then suspect their very Senses, or say that either their Imaginations were deluded, or else all was done by natural Causes, tho' perhaps they did not well understand them, or at least would conclude that which appears to be a Miracle was merely an Accident, and so there is no Account to be sought or given of it. Thus we know the greatest Miracles that ever were wrought have been eluded, even in the Times wherein they were done, and by those Men that saw them. But now when those Things that I make the Instances of a Providence, (the ancient Miracles, I mean) have undergone the Test of Time, and been canvassed in several Ages, and yet no Flaw found in them: In this Case we have more full Ground for our Belief, than if the Things had been fresh before our Eyes; for that same incredulous Humour which now objects against the Credit  
of

of Things, because they were done long ago, would find out as good a Trick to put upon a present Miracle; such a Man would say, (and with more Colour of Reason) though I cannot detect the Cheat of this for the present, yet Time may discover it; which cannot be said in the other Case.

BUT lastly, I add, that tho' it is true, that all Ages are not alike illustrated with such prodigious Acts of Providence as are strictly called Miracles, yet there is no Time of the World wherein there are not very plainly the Prints of Divinity, and Evidences of a Providence continually presiding over the World, if a Man do not humourishly despise them (for Want of the pompous Circumstances of Miracles) or stupidly overlook them, because of their Frequency; such as (for Example) the preserving the several Species of Things in the World, that amongst that vast Multitude of the Kinds of Birds or Insects, and their several Enmities to one another, and the many Accidents all of them are exposed to, there should notwithstanding in so long a Tract of Time, not be any one Kind of them lost or extinguished.

THAT the Holy Scriptures and Christian Religion should be upheld in Spight of the Combination of Wit and Ignorance, Power and Malice against them.

THAT Civil Government should be preserved against all the Interest of resolutely wicked Men, and against all the brutish Violence of the enraged Rabble.

BESIDES the remarkable Infatuation of the Counsels, discovering the Plots, and defeating the



Designs of crafty and atheistical Politicians ; and frequent Terrors upon the Consciences, and Damps upon the Spirits of the most desperate and flagitious Men, and the assisting, animating, and comforting the Hearts of good Men in their greatest Agonies and most difficult Undertakings. Some of these Things I mentioned before, and all of them happen in every Age, and are never the less Evidences of Providence for being ordinary.

INDEED it may and doth fall out that now and then Things happen quite otherwise, as that Conspiracies of wicked Men are successful, &c. and GOD seems to order it so on Purpose, because He will not be traced in his Methods, and because He will leave some Trials of Mens Willingness to believe in Him : But the other Course is so usual, and Things often fall out so patly that Way, that it must be extreme Humourousness to deny a Providence in them.

BUT, besides all these, there is one Thing more comes to my Mind, which is beyond all the fore-mentioned, and seems to be set up on Purpose by Divine Providence, as a standing Monument of itself to all Ages, and that is, the present Condition of the *Jews*.

THEY were once a great and flourishing Kingdom, and fortunate beyond all Example ; but from the Time they grew incurably wicked and rebellious, against the GOD that had so signally blessed them, and had to all their other Impieties crucified the Saviour of the World ; they have for the Space of sixteen or seventeen hundred Years, been *like the Field which GOD hath cursed*, and been the most prodigious Instance of Unhappiness that ever was in the World. Forasmuch as tho' they are  
still

still vastly numerous, a cunning and projecting Sort of People, yet they are every where scattered thro' all Nations, but every where under Marks of Infamy, and no where able to become a People, so as to live under Laws and a Government of their own: Notwithstanding all which, and which is the Wonder of all, they keep up their Stock and Pedigree with Exactness, as if GOD intended (as certainly He did) by all this to set them forth as a lively Instance both of his just Providence, and of the Truth of the Spirit of Prophecy in the Holy Scriptures. This, together with the foregoing Instances, I think, affords sufficient Evidence that GOD doth not now neglect the World, and leave all to run in the Road of natural Causes, but even in these latter Ages, as well as formerly, gives some signal Strokes of an over-ruling Hand. What think you, *Biophilus*? If you have any Thing farther to say to the contrary, propound it.

*Bioph.* TRULY, I have nothing very material to say farther.

*Sebast.* THEN, GOD be thanked, we have now gained two Feet for Religion to stand upon; namely, we have a GOD to whom it is due, and we have an Obligation from the Consideration of his Providence, to make all the World observant of Him; at least so far as any Part of the Creation is capable of such a Duty.

*Bioph.* VERY right; but I remember you said, That to lay the Foundation of Religion effectually, it must appear, that Mankind is under a Capacity of the aforesaid Obligation, and of performing this Duty towards the Divine Majesty. Now as for this, tho' I foresee no Difficulty in the Case, yet  
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however, I pray, exprefs yourself a little more fully about it.

*Sebast.* THE Bottom of this third Point is no more but this: To make Mankind a Subject capable of the Obligations of Religion, these three Things are requisite:

1. THAT he be able in some Measure to judge what Carriage from himself is fit and decent towards GOD.

2. THAT he be a free Agent, and have it in his Choice and Power to determine himself towards the Performance of what he understands to be fit and decent, or towards the contrary if he will,

3. THAT he be able to reflect upon what he hath done, so as to accuse and condemn, or to acquit and justify himself accordingly as his Actions and Carriage towards the Deity have been agreeable or disagreeable to the Judgment afore-said,

THE first of these Powers and Capacities is commonly called *Understanding*; the second, *Will*, or *Freedom of Choice*; and the third is known by the Name of *Conscience*.

WITHOUT the first of these, namely, if Mankind had not *Understanding* to discern the Difference of Things, and some Rule within him whereby to judge of moral Good and Evil, he would be lawless and brutish, having no other Measures to go by, than his Passions and Sense.

WITHOUT



WITHOUT the second, namely, if he had not *Freedom of Will* to determine himself towards Good and Evil, he must be under a fatal Necessity of doing whatsoever he should happen to do; and then there could be no such Thing as Acceptableness to GOD when he did well, nor Blameableness when he did otherwise; because there could be no such Things as Virtue or Vice in his Case; and consequently no more Room for either Rewards or Punishments, than there is in the Motion of Plants or Stones, or any other the most insensible Things.

WITHOUT the third and last, viz. If Mankind had not such a Faculty in him as we call *Conscience*, so as to reflect upon his own Actions and Carriage, by Virtue of which he either justifies himself when he hath obeyed the best Reason of his Mind, or upbraids and scourges himself whenever he hath done otherwise, he would have no Regard what Use he made of his Liberty.

BUT by all these together (if they appear to be in human Nature) Mankind is fully qualified for the Obligations of Religion.

Now looking over the World as far as we can, we find no Creature that we converse with, to be endowed with these Faculties but ourselves, and then looking into ourselves, we find by undeniable Experience, that we have every one of the aforesaid Capacities: And hence I conclude, that Man, and Man only of all Creatures, (in the visible World) is the Subject of Religion. And this I called the third Fundamental Principle of Religion; not that I take it to be properly and strictly so, but in Regard it is manifest, that there can be no sure Ground for Religion without it.

AND

AND thus, I think, I have fully answered your Demand, concerning the Ground-work of Religion, and laid out a Foundation both large enough and strong enough to bear the whole Structure. And now I hope you will see no Cause to suspect it to be a mere melancholy Fancy, or politick Stratagem, the Result of Education, or Effect of Weakness and Fear, but the most manly and rational Thing that any Man can concern himself about.

*Bioph.* I CONFESS you have done as you say, *Sebastian*, and I thank you heartily for it. You have discovered to me the Foundations; tell me what Superstructures must be made upon them. In the first Place, What do you mean by Religion?

*Sebast.* BY Religion in general I understand nothing else but a serious Study to know GOD, together with a careful Endeavour to please Him, and procure his Favour. This is that which not only the several Sects of Christians mean by Religion, but is that which all Men of Sense, and even the better Sort of *Pagans* themselves, agree in.

*Bioph.* I PRAY condescend to explain yourself more particularly; and first give me Leave to ask you what you mean by the knowing GOD? Do you intend any Thing more than the Acknowledgment that there is a GOD?

*Sebast.* YES, *Biophilus*, I here understand a great deal more by the knowing of GOD than I did in all our former Discourse. While we were only laying the Foundations of Religion, there no more was required than to acknowledge his Being, and that

that because (as then I shewed you) therein lies the first Reason of such a Thing as we call Religion. For there is nothing to oblige a Man to have any Regard to himself, nor to make any Difference of his Actions, 'till he acknowledge such a Being as hath a Sovereignty over him, and to whom he is accountable for his Carriage. But when that is resolved of, then there arises a two-fold Occasion of studying farther to know the God which he acknowledges to be.

FIRST, because it cannot but appear a Point of great Decency towards this acknowledged Sovereign of the World, that we employ our Minds in the Study and Contemplation of Him; and indeed to do otherwise is not only unmanly, but an Argument of such Contempt as is not consistent with the real Persuasion of such a Being.

AGAIN, forasmuch as by the bare Acknowledgment that there is a God, we see Reason to have a Care of our Actions with respect to Him; so now when we are come to that, it will farther concern us to have some Rule and Measure to govern ourselves by, whereby to make a Distinction of Good and Evil, that we may please Him in what we do; and that is only attainable by serious Study of the Divine Nature, Attributes, and such Declarations of his Will as He hath made.

FOR it is not every Thing, whatsoever we may fancy, that will please Him: For then all Religions would be alike true and safe, and none but Atheists and Hypocrites could miscarry. But it is certain, God hath a Mind of his own, and that Devotion or Observance only pleases Him which He appoints; all other is foolish Superstition, and at best but lost Labour.

*Bioph.*



*Bioph.* BUT I hope, after all, you do not intend to represent the Deity as a touchy and humourfome Being; for then Religion must needs be the most anxious Thing in the World, and far from what you have hitherto made me believe.

*Sebast.* GOD forbid that such a Thought of the Divine Majesty should enter into any Man's Heart. As for GOD Himself, He is certainly nothing else but wise and great Goodness, too great to be fondly taken with little Things, and too wise and good to be offended with Trifles: And therefore Religion cannot consist in Niceties and Punctilio's, as if it was the servile Flattery of a Tyrant; and not the ingenuous Service of loyal Subjects to a brave and generous Prince. Notwithstanding, as I said before, He hath a Mind and Will of his own, and expects that should be complied with.

*Bioph.* BUT is it not enough that a Man live well and virtuously, and serve GOD devoutly? Will not that please Him?

*Sebast.* YES doubtless it will, but still you must have a Rule and Standard for all that; otherwise there will be no real Difference of Virtue and Vice, no Distinction between Superstition and Devotion.

*Bioph.* NOW am I in a Wilderness, when I thought myself even at *Canaan*.

*Sebast.* WHY, what is the Matter, *Biophilus*? Could you think that mere good Meaning or any Kind of blind Devotion would serve the Turn? Or that Man might prescribe to his Maker what He should be pleased with?

*Bioph.*

*Bioph.* THE Matter is plainly this, *Sebastian*: I perceive that if a Man have a Mind to be religious, he will be at Loss which Way to take. His own Conscience, you say, is not a sufficient Guide for him, because that may be mistaken, and therefore he must have a Rule, he must, say you, study to know GOD's Nature, and that is not enough, but GOD hath a Mind and Will of his own, and that must be known too; and that is not all neither, for He may alter his Mind, and then we are at a worse Loss than ever: If therefore this be the State of the Case, it is to no Purpose to think or talk further of this Business.

*Sebast.* COME, cheer up, Man, there is no Danger of all this, this seeming Difficulty will presently clear up, by that Time I have told you, that GOD's Mind and Nature are so entirely the same, that whatsoever is agreeable to his Nature, cannot be contradicted by any Act of his Will; and whatsoever is the Express of his Will, is also the true Copy of his Nature (at least in the general). And therefore if we perfectly understood the Divine Nature, there would be no Need that He should make any Declaration of his Will; for then it would be the only Instance of Religion to imitate Him, which is the truest Honour that can be done to Him. But now forasmuch as we neither do nor can perfectly understand his Nature, because it is too great and too sublime for us to take a full View of it; therefore it is that we stand in Need of the Declaration of his Will for our Guide in his Service.

*Bioph.* IF this be so (as it seems reasonable enough) then why did you speak of his Nature in this Case, seeing the Business lies in the studying the Divine Will; at least, if there be any such

Thing as a Declaration of it which may be come at?

*Sebast.* THE Reason of my making Mention both of the Divine Nature and the Divine Will, will become as evident to you as any Thing we have discoursed of, by that Time you have considered these two Things.

FIRST, That forasmuch as natural Light (which is the common Principle of Mankind) can make some Discovery of the Nature of GOD to us, but little or nothing of his Will; therefore it is necessary, that such as have not Divine Revelation, should study the Divine Nature for their Guidance.

AGAIN, secondly, It is very considerable, that even those that live under the Advantage of Divine Revelation, may be imposed upon by counterfeit Oracles, if they do not well study the Divine Nature, by the Knowledge of which they may be able to detect such Impostures. For if a Doctrine be broached in the World, that is contrary to the natural and reasonable Notions Men have of GOD, although such Doctrine pretend never so much to Divinity; nay, if it should seem to have the same miraculous Attestation to it that the Gospel itself hath; we may and ought to reject it upon this Account, that we are sure nothing can come from GOD which contradicts Himself, nor can there be any Declaration of his Will, which is contrary to the known Measures of his Nature. And therefore the Nature of GOD, as well as the Will of GOD, is to be attended to, as our Rule in this great Affair of Religion.

*Bioph.*



*Bioph.* Now I think I understand you thus far; and if I be not mistaken, then I have two great Things still to ask your Assistance in: 1. That you will help me to understand the Divine Nature. 2. That you will direct me how I may come to the Knowledge of his Will: By which two together I find I must be enabled both to please Him and procure his Favour. And I first pray explain the Nature of GOD to me.

*Sebast.* I KNOW you are a wiser Man than to expect from me that I should give you a perfect Definition of the Divine Majesty; for by what hath been said already, you cannot but be sensible of the Vanity and Impossibility of such an Attempt. But if your Desire be (as I suppose it is) that I should represent GOD to you under such Expressions that we may understand one another what we mean when we speak of Him, and also may sufficiently distinguish him from all other Beings; then I doubt not to give you Satisfaction.

*Bioph.* I ASK you no more but that promise, saving that I expect also that your Description of Him should not only render him a fit Object of Religion, but also in some Measure a Rule for it too, according to what you last discoursed.

*Sebast.* I UNDERSTAND you, and why may not these few Words satisfy you, viz. GOD is an Infinite and Eternal Spirit.

*Bioph.* Ah, *Sebastian*! The Words are few indeed, but they are such as will put you to the Expence of a great many more before I shall understand them; every Word is a Mystery, Spirit, Eternal, Infinite.

*Sebast.* BE of good Courage, *Biophilus*, for tho' I foretold you we should never be able fully to comprehend the Divine Majesty, yet with a little Patience and Attention you shall find those Phrases very intelligible.

*Bioph.* I CONFESS you have not disappointed me hitherto, and therefore I will not despair, nor do I intend any longer to dispute with you, but to learn of you; therefore, I pray, in the first Place, tell me plainly and intelligibly what a Spirit is, and what you mean when you say, *GOD is a Spirit?*

*Sebast.* WHEN I call GOD a Spirit, I mean neither more or less than this, That He is an understanding, free and powerful Substance, which yet is not visible, nor can fall under the Notice of our bodily Senses.

IN the first Place, I call a Spirit a *Substance*, that you may be sure I mean not a Phantom (as your Friends use to suspect) but Something which is as real as Matter itself.

AND yet, in the second Place, to distinguish it from Matter, I say it is not visible, nor can fall under the Notice of our bodily Senses, as that other Kind of Substance doth.

AND then, in the last Place, to shew you that this is no Contradiction, and to deliver you from the Prejudice of Sense, I represent to you the Effects and Operations, of a Spirit which are such as must needs argue it to be a Substance, and an excellent one too; namely, that it hath Power to move the Matter, wherein it resides, and also hath Understanding, and Choice, which Matter is incapable of.

So that what a Soul is in ourselves, that doth this Notion of Spirit imply God to be to the whole World; as by that we move our Bodies, and can give check to our own Motion, so doth God preside over the World.

*Bioph.* I ACKNOWLEDGE you have delivered a consistent notion of such a Thing as a Spirit, and I see no Impossibility that there should be such a Thing. But how doth it appear that there is really such a Thing as a Spirit, or that if there be a God, he must needs be a Spirit?

*Sebast.* THE Reason is very plain. For something must be eternal, or nothing could have been at all; and Matter could not be that eternal Being; therefore it must be Spirit or nothing that gave Beginning to Things, and consequently this Thing Spirit is not only a consistent Notion, but a necessary Reality, and God is that Spirit.

BESIDES, to convince you of this the more effectually, let me mind you of what, I have heretofore observed, that we find in ourselves Something which not only moves and acts our Bodies, but also sometimes bears hard against them, crosses and controuls them in their Interests and Inclinations. Now surely that which doth so, must needs be something of an higher and different Nature from them, and is no other than that Kind of Spiritual Being which we call a Soul; and so you have another and more obvious Evidence of the actual Existence of a Spiritual Substance.

*Bioph.* I APPREHEND you; but I pray, what Influence will the Acknowledgment of God to be a Spirit have upon the directing a Man in his Devotion towards Him?



*Sebast.* THE Belief that GOD is a Spirit is of very great Consequence to Religion upon several Accounts.

PARTLY as it obliges us to be sincere, hearty and inward in all our Devotions to Him, and not think to put Him off with Outsides and Compliments: For seeing *He is a Spirit, He will be worshipped in Spirit and Truth*, John iv. 24.

PARTLY also as it renders it evident to us, that neither the Sound of Words, nor any peculiar Posture, Ceremony, or other such like childish Trifles can of themselves be acceptable to Him who is a great and a wise Spirit, no nor yet the Fat of Beasts, nor the Odours of sweet Incense, nor Gold, nor Silver, nor any of those Things that are admired among Men; but least of all such sensual and lascivious Rites as were in Use among the Pagans: For as none of the former can be suitable Oblations to such a pure Being; so it is certain those last named can only besit an impure Spirit, such an one as the Devil is.

BUT principally, as it convinces us of the Vanity and Impiety of making Images of God, or of thinking to do Honour to Him by the Use of them in his Worship, since He being a spiritual Substance can by no Means be represented by them, but must needs be debased and render'd much meaner to our Thoughts by such Representations: And therefore we find, that not only the Holy Scripture utterly condemns such Usages as idolatrous and abominable to Him; but that amongst the Pagans themselves, all those who arrived at this Notion, that God was a Spirit, rejected Image-Worship, and thought that of the Mind and Spirit to be only acceptable to Him.

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To all which add, that the Belief of the Spiritual Nature of GOD enables us more easily to conceive the Greatness of his Power, and that it is easy to Him to mind and govern the World without Trouble or Weariness to Himself, and with the greater Advantage to us. For it is not imaginable that a perfectly immaterial Substance should be sensible of any Lassitude or Decay; and thus the Belief of GOD's being a Spirit, confirms our Trust in his Divine Providence, which is the prime Spring of Devotion.

*Bioph.* I AM abundantly satisfied that GOD is a Spirit, and that He ought to be so acknowledged. Now proceed, in the next Place, to tell me what you mean when you say He is eternal.

*Sebast.* BY GOD's being an eternal Spirit, I mean, that as He had no Beginning, so He can have no End of his Being, and that because He is necessarily, or could not but be; such an Excellency of Being must be allowed to something or other, or else nothing could have been at all; and it cannot be attributed to the World, or any Part of it, and therefore must be due to GOD.

*Bioph.* OF what Moment is it to Religion, whether GOD be acknowledged to be eternal or not?

*Sebast.* OH! Of very great Moment; for, in the first Place, this being acknowledged we are thereby assured that all the Gods of the Gentiles, or whatsoever were either supposed to have a Beginning, or to die, or decline in Power and Divinity, could not be Gods but the Idols of foolish and deluded Men; and at the same Time we are as certain that the true GOD can neither do, nor be capable of any Hurt, no nor of any Change, but ever  
remains

remains immutably the same: For whatsoever is liable to change, may also cease to be.

AGAIN, Upon the Consideration of God's Eternity depends a great Obligation to Religion, forasmuch as by this Means He hath it always in His Power to reward or punish Men according to their Demerit, wherein consists a great Secret of his Providence, namely, the Reason of his Patience and Long-suffering, that He doth not presently execute Vengeance upon wicked Men, nor on the other Side, immediately deliver good Men out of Trouble because He hath it always in his Power to do it, and if He do it not in this World will be sure to do it in the next.

To both which may be added, That although the Notion of Eternity of Time to come be a great Deep into which we cannot look without Giddiness and Disturbance, yet we may be certain there is such a Thing, because we are sure that God cannot cease to be, no more than He began to be; and therefore the Sollicitude which is in Men about what is to come after their Deaths, is not the Effect of Weakness but a rational and well-grounded Prudence.

*Bioph.* BUT yet there is one difficult Thing remains, namely, what do you mean when you say God is an infinite Spirit?

*Sebast.* BY that I mean that whereas all other Beings (as well Spiritual as material) which are not necessarily, or which might not have been, must consequently, whensoever they come into Being, depend upon Him, who hath being in Himself, and so be limited and circumscribed by Him; that is they can have but such a Portion of Power, Life and



and Understanding as He hath allotted them: On the contrary, He that was before all Things, and the Cause of all Things, and who could not but be, must needs be unlimited in all Kind of Perfections, forasmuch as there was nothing before Him, to limit Him, nothing equal to Him to rival Him, nothing after Him to intrench upon Him, and consequently all conceivable Perfection must be essentially in Him; that is, He must be most powerful, most wise, most just, and most good.

*Bioph.* I THINK I need not ask you of what Importance this last Point is, for I am aware that this Attribute renders Him the Object of our Admiration, Fear, Trust, and all other Instances of Devotion

*Sebast.* IT is very true, *Biophilus*; and besides, by Virtue of this Infinity, He can be present to all Places to take Notice of all Passages; He can easily accomplish whatsoever He promises or threatens, He can be straiten'd in Nothing, nor need any Thing, having all Things in Himself, and consequently, it is impossible to conceive of Him as a stingy, narrow-hearted Being that can envy or malign his Creatures, but contrariwise, He must be unspeakably good, and take Delight in nothing more than in communicating of his own Fulness to them.

BUT that which I would especially remark, is this, that a Being, infinite in Goodness and Wisdom, can never be the Author of absurd, or harsh and impossible Laws; for any such would be a Contradiction to the afore-named Perfections of his Nature: And therefore as we have upon this Account great Obligations to serve Him chearfully; so we may assure ourselves that whatsoever pretends to

to be a Divine Law, and can be made appear to be inhumanly rigorous, or intolerably difficult to be observed, is either no Law of his, or at least is not rightly interpreted.

AND thus, I hope, I have in some Measure explained to you the Nature of God, and also led you to observe the main Strokes of Piety or the Laws of natural Religion towards Him, deducible from those Principles: And you yourself by attentive Consideration, may be able to deduce many other of like Nature. What other Service do you now command me?

*Bioph.* I WOULD in the next Place request of you, that you will discourse to me of the Divine Will, as you have done of his Nature.

*Sebast.* If we should go no farther, and that I had nothing to say concerning Divine Revelation, yet you see we have enough already to render Religion not only worthy of a prudent Man's Care, but the most reasonable and necessary Thing in the whole World: So that Atheism with all its Boasts of Wit and extraordinary Sagacity, and Scepticism too with all its Caution and Reservedness, are quite beaten out of the Field.

*Bioph.* I REMEMBER you said that human Reason was too short to be a Standard for God, and that if it was possible for us perfectly to understand the Divine Nature (which we cannot) yet since He is a free Agent, and hath a Mind of his own, and will not be prescribed to by us, it is necessary in order to the pleasing Him, that we should be more particularly instructed concerning his Will and Pleasure: Now therefore my Desire is (if it be possible)

to be ascertained of the Divine Will, that I may know how to carry myself agreeably thereunto.

*Sebast.* FIRST let me ask you what Ways are there imaginable that might give you or any other Man Satisfaction in this Case; and what are those you could think fit for GOD to make Use of to this Purpose?

*Bioph.* I COULD think of several Ways whereby GOD might, if He please, make known his Mind to Men, namely, I doubt not but He can, if He will, speak from Heaven in an audible Voice, so that we shall hear Him as we hear one another; or if He thought good to condescend so far He could personally appear in the World, and instruct Men in what He requires of them; again, He could singly apply Himself to particular Persons, and by some secret Operations of his, instill his Mind into their Hearts; or to name no more, He could guide the Thoughts and Hands of some certain Men whilst they committed his Will to Writing, which should be a Record and Digest of the Divine Laws to all Ages of the World.

*Sebast.* VERY good: Then I hope it will abundantly satisfy you, if I shew you that GOD hath not only made Use of some one or other of these Ways, but hath by every one of them notified his Pleasure at some Time or other to the Sons of Men.

FOR Instance, in the first Ages of the World before there were any Divine Laws settled for the Conduct of Mens Lives, it was not unusual with the Divine Majesty to give particular Intimations of his Mind, especially in such Cases as the Use of natural Reason could not extend to; and those that  
were



were extraordinary good Men, had very frequent Experience of this in those ancient Times, and even the better Sort of Heathens were not destitute of such special Discoveries of God's Will (to supply the Defects of human Reason in Divine Things) and there is nothing more known and acknowledged amongst them than this.

AND it is also certain, that though God as a Spirit hath properly no Voice of his own, yet He hath several Times framed a Voice, and caused it to be heard from Heaven; the famous Instance whereof was at the giving of Laws to the *Jewish* Nation from Mount *Sinai*; nor have later Times (no not amongst the *Pagans* themselves) been altogether left without such prodigious Discoveries of the Divine Will, unless we call in Question the Credit of all their Writings.

BUT for God's condescending to come Himself into the World, and to instruct Men in such Things as are agreeable to his Will, this was most gloriously verified in the Conversation of our Saviour *Christ Jesus* in human Nature upon Earth, who had all the Attestations to his Divinity that could be desired, both in the Wonders of his Birth, the Miracles of his Life, and the Glories of his Resurrection, but especially in the frequent and humble Ministry of Angels to Him as Occasion served. And He familiarly and fully interpreted the Mind of God to Men; and the more to awaken the Attention of Mankind to Him, a Voice from Heaven also attended his Entrance on this Office.

AND then in the last Place, for God's declaring his Mind to us by the Ministry of Men, this He hath abundantly done in the Books of the Holy Scripture, which, as they were dictated by Himself

to

to those holy Men that composed them, so they have been carefully preserved by his special Providence from the Changes and Corruptions that all human Things are liable to, that so they might convey his Pleasure to all Persons, Climates, and Ages of the World.

*Bioph.* BUT do you mean that a Man may consult which of these Oracles, and when he pleases, for a Resolution in any Matter of Difficulty that occurs in the Business of Religion?

*Sebast.* No indeed, *Biophilus*, that you must not expect, but must content yourself only with the last of the four, namely, the Holy Scripture, that is the standing and *lively Oracle of God*.

*Bioph.* BUT may I not ask, why might not some of those other Declarations of the Divine Mind have been continued as well as that of the Scripture, especially a Voice from Heaven, or if it had been but for the Attestation to, and fuller Confirmation of the written Way of Divine Revelation?

*Sebast.* NAY, *Biophilus*, we must not ask God a Reason of that, but be thankful to Him for what He hath afforded us, especially since that is as much as is necessary for our Guidance; for those that *hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the Dead*, Luke xvi. 31. much less if they heard a Voice from Heaven.

NEVERTHELESS I must tell you, I do not think it altogether impossible to give a modest Man more particular Satisfaction in this Case. For there were apparent Reasons why God should make such prodigious Discoveries of Himself in former Times, as He doth not make now; namely, because for a

good Part of the Age of the World there was no written Law, and so GOD must apply Himself to Men in some extraordinary Way, or they would have had no Instruction in his Will at all. And then after the Law was given by a Voice from Heaven on Mount *Sinai*, and written on Tables of Stone, it was in itself so imperfect a Draught of the Divine Mind, and for the most Part so accommodated to the Weakness of that People, that it would have been hard to have kept a Man of any Sagacity in a constant Belief of it as coming from GOD, if He had not from Time to Time made prodigious Attestations to it: But now especially since our Saviour came into the World, and we have the Books of the New Testament as well as of the Old; there is so full a Declaration of the Divine Mind, and that not in Types or Figures neither, but in so plain a Way, and with so much Agreeableness of the Things discovered to the Reason of Mankind, that there is no Need of any secondary Attestation, nor any Thing more than that it appears that those Writings were indited by GOD.

BESIDES, it is to be considered that the Way of giving Answer by a Voice from Heaven, unless it had been granted to every Man, (and then it must have been done almost every Day and Hour, and in every Part of the World also) could not have given better Satisfaction to the Generality of Men, (I mean to such as were not Ear-Witnesses of such a Voice) than this Way of Scripture doth: For without infinite and continual Miracles, it must have been their Lot and Duty to believe without hearing such a Voice.

*Bioph.* WHAT do you mean by this Way of delivering the Will of GOD, by the Writings of the Holy Scripture.

*Sebast.*



*Sebast.* THE Way is this : Divine Wisdom resolving to give a standing Law to Mankind, in the first Place, inspired certain holy Men, that is, made clear Impressions of his own Sentiments upon their Minds, and then also guided and governed them in Writing and Publishing the aforesaid Impressions for the Use of others.

THAT it is easy for Almighty God to imprint his own Sense upon the Minds of such Men as He shall choose for that Purpose, you cannot doubt, when you consider that Power of His which He displayed in the Creation, and that therefore the Minds of Men must needs be *in his Hands as Clay in the Hands of the Potter*, so that He can mould and figure them as He pleases.

AND He can give Assurance to the Minds of such Men, that it is He Himself that makes those Impressions upon them. For certainly God hath Ways enough to distinguish Himself and his Motions from Illusions.

THAT also He should be able to guide and govern those holy Pen-men in the Writing of what He Himself had put into their Minds, and in delivering his Sense so fully and clearly as to answer his End, and become a sufficient Rule for Men to govern themselves by, must be granted, or you make Him more impotent than a Man.

LASTLY, That He could by his Providence preserve the Books so written from being imbezelled or corrupted, that so they may answer the Ends aforesaid, cannot be denied without denying his Providence.

So that in Sum, this Way of the Holy Scripture must needs be a very sufficient Way of Divine Legislation, and an abundant Supply of the Defects of natural Reason in Divine Things.

*Bioph.* I GRANT all you have hitherto said, which amounts to no more but this, that it is not impossible for GOD to do so; but now the Question is, how shall it appear that He hath done so? Or (which amounts to the same Thing) how do you prove that those Books (commonly called the Bible) are indeed what they pretend to be?

*Sebast.* IN order to your full Satisfaction in that Point, let me desire you to lay together the four following Particulars.

*First,* IT cannot be denied but that the Books of Holy Scripture are (at least generally speaking) the most ancient Monuments in the whole World. Wherefore, besides the Veneration which we commonly allow to Antiquity, it is apparent that they have endured the Test of all Times past, and that all the Wit of Men hath not hitherto been able to find any considerable Flaw in them, and consequently their Authority and Credibility is so much greater than any other Books, by how much the Time is longer since they were written and published; for there have not been wanting those that have endeavoured to expose them, and if they had been able to have done it, doubtless long e're this Time these Books had lost all their Veneration: But since they still retain their Esteem, (notwithstanding all Efforts of their Enemies to the contrary) there is Ground enough to believe they never shall be able to do it, and consequently that there can be no reasonable Suspicion of the Truth of them.

To

To which may be added, that since Divine Providence hath so long preserved and watched over these Writings, it is natural to collect, that they are such as He peculiarly owns and recommends to us.

*Secondly*, It is to be considered that the Doctrine of these Books is perfectly agreeable to the natural Notions we have of God, and therefore being fit for Him to be the Author of, they must consequently be fit for us to entertain, as coming from Him, at least upon reasonable Evidence of Fact that they did so.

If indeed any Man could justly charge these Writings as containing any Thing absurd or impossible, or make appear that they countenanced such Things as are disagreeable to what we naturally know of God, or can discern to be in Him by the best Improvement of our Understanding: Then we could not be bound to believe them, although they should be supposed to have all the Confirmation imaginable; for no Man can believe what he will, nor be obliged to act contrary to the natural Sense of his Mind, upon any Authority whatsoever.

BUT whensoever a Doctrine is propounded that is reasonable in itself, and besides hath reasonable Evidence that it came from God, then it is highly reasonable that we should receive it as such, notwithstanding some trifling Objections which may be to the contrary.

*Thirdly*, It is especially to be minded that the Doctrine of the Holy Scripture hath not wanted such special Assurances that it came from God, as were fit for Him to give, or for Men to expect. For all those holy Men that delivered any Part of



it to the World, were abetted by Miracles wrought for the Confirmation of what they delivered: So that either GOD must be supposed to set the Seal of his Omnipotency to a Falshood, or else these Doctrines are the Discoveries of the Mind of GOD.

Now that there was such miraculous Proof, we may be assured in the general by this Consideration, that it is not imaginable that such Doctrine and such Books should have obtained that Credit in the Times when they were set on Foot, without such Confirmation, especially since the Matter of those Writings in a great Part was so very different from the Notions, and Practices, and Interests of those Ages and Persons to whom they were published. “ Infomuch that (as a great Man said of old) to “ suppose the World to be brought to the Reception of these Doctrines without a Miracle, might “ justly seem the greatest Miracle that ever was.”

AND in particular, that the Books of the Old Testament had such Divine Attestation, the very Books themselves frequently appeal to, or at least give us the History of such Things of this Kind as could neither be denied by the Men of the present Age when they were done, nor confuted by those that came after; besides the famous Spirit of Prophecy, which displayed itself all along those Times.

AND for the New Testament, besides all the Miracles wrought by our Saviour and his Apostles, that one of his Resurrection was a Thing both so notorious to be observed, and so easy to have been confuted if it had been false, that there is no Colour of Reason to doubt of it, and consequently none to doubt of his Doctrine: And in the Apostles Times, that miraculous Ability of speaking with all Kind of Tongues, which was suddenly bestowed

ed upon the Christians on the famous Day of *Pentecost*, was a Thing equally stupendous in itself, and irrefragable in its Evidence of the Christian Religion.

Now I have shewed you before, that whatsoever Point hath been once sufficiently proved, it must be true for ever, and there can be no Reason to expect After-Miracles, for Confirmation of it.

*Lastly*, IT is observable that the several Parts of Holy Scripture, I mean the Books of the Old and New Testament, like a Pair of Indentures, justify one another, and assure us that there can be no Fraud or Forgery in either of them.

BESIDES this, it is in the first Place certain, that these several Books, or Parts of Holy Scripture were written and published in several Ages of the World, which were very remote from each other, and consequently by such Men as could possibly hold no Correspondence or Confederacy with each other.

AND secondly, it is as plain that the Old Testament foretells, many Ages before, what Things should come to pass many Ages after; wherefore if those Things came to pass accordingly, there can be no Doubt but GOD inspired those Men that prophesied those Things: And if the New Testament, on the other Side, contain a Relation of such Events as fully answer those Predictions, then are both of them certainly true.

AND now laying these four Things together, and only setting aside the Demand of present and daily Miracles, which I have shewed to be unreasonable to expect, I pray tell me what farther Evidence can

can any ingenuous Man require in such a Case as this is?

*Bioph.* To speak the Truth from my Heart, I cannot tell.

*Sebast.* WHY then I hope, *Biophilus*, you think yourself now concerned in those sacred Records, and for the Time to come will make them a principal Part of your Study.

*Bioph.* I AM hitherto an utter Stranger to the Contents of those Books; I pray, therefore, give me in short the Sum of them.

*Sebast.* As far as I can comprehend so great and weighty a Subject, and so full a Writing in my Mind, the Scripture principally consists of these three Things.

*First*, AN exact and excellent Rule of holy Living, by conforming ourselves to which, we shall most certainly please GOD.

*Secondly*, THE most powerful and effectual Motives to provoke us to an uniform and thorough Compliance with the aforesaid Rule.

*Thirdly*, THE most proper Means and Assistances to that End, that so we may not only be encouraged to undertake, but enabled to accomplish that holy Course which is prescribed.

THIS (I take it) is a Summary of the whole Bible, at least the principal Contents of it.

*Bioph.* PRAY explain these Things more fully to me; and first I desire to know more particularly what



what the peculiar Laws and Rules of this Institution are.

*Sebast.* THE last and ultimate Revelation of the Divine Will, in the New Testament, must consequently be more perfect than any other; yet notwithstanding it is not destructive, but only perfective of those that went before it: And therefore, as it contradicts no former Prophecy, or Revelation of GOD's Will; so it repeals no Law of Nature or Reason, derogates from no Rule of Piety, Gratitude, Civility, or Humanity, but only adds to them, and improves them. So that indeed the Christian Institution is a Pandect or Digest of all that is *grave, decent, prudent, virtuous, or Praise-worthy*, *Phil. iv. 8.* all which Things it not only re-inforces by more powerful Arguments, but requires every of them in greater Perfection. But now the Supplement or Addition it makes to all those, is that which is to be called the peculiar Character of this Religion, and that, I think, may be reduced to these three Heads.

*First*, IT enjoins a more excellent and spiritual Worship of GOD.

*Secondly*, A MORE refined Purity of Heart and Life.

*Thirdly*, A MORE noble, generous and diffusive Charity.

I. THE Gospel prescribes a more spiritual Worship than was in Use in the World before; for our Saviour expressly affirms, *The Time now comes when the true Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and Truth*, and gives the Reason, *because GOD is a Spirit*, *John iv. 23, 24.* It is true GOD ever  
was

was a Spirit, and it is impossible He should ever have been otherwise; but his Spiritual Nature was not so well understood heretofore, whilst He was wont to represent Himself by Fire, or in human Shape amongst Men: And whilst He required to have a Temple built for his Residence, as if He required an external State of Grandeur or bodily Accommodation; and lastly, whilst He required Sacrifices and Oblations to be made to Him of such Things as are of Value among Men. But now, since He hath given Proof of his mighty Majesty without those visible Appearances, and the Sons of Men are better instructed that He is a pure Spirit, without all Mixture of Matter, and infinitely full, perfect and happy in Himself, without any Accession of other Things to Him: Henceforth He will not be worshipped with the Steams of Blood and Fat, nor pleased with Clouds of Incense, but with hearty Adorations, with raised Affections, with the Contemplations of pure Minds, with inward Reverence and Admiration of Him, with devout Prayers and Praises offered to Him, with Love, with Trust and Confidence in Him, and Endeavours of conforming ourselves to Him: This is the Worship that is suitable to a good, and happy, and a Spiritual Being; yet not excluding bodily Expressions of Reverence neither, but principally requiring the former, and making this latter only the Effect of that.

2. THE Gospel requires a more refined Temper of Heart and Life than was usually practised or easy to be arrived at before; it prescribes to our inward Man as well as our outward Actions, and that our Hearts be pure as well as our bodily Members; that our Reason have the Mastery of our Lusts and Passions, so that we either indulge our Sensuality in the intemperate Use of Pleasure, nor live as if we were born to eat and drink, but be above

bove the Relish of bodily Entertainments; that we subdue our Passions and soar above the Tempest of this World, so as to despise the usual Cares, and Fears, and Solitudes of the present Life, and enjoy ourselves in a Kind of Divine Tranquility and Security.

THE Generality of Mankind, both *Jews* and *Pagans*, thought it a mighty Felicity to hoard up Riches, to grasp civil Power, a ravishing Thing to swim in sensual Pleasures; and nothing was counted either more sweet or more brave than to revenge a Man's Self when he thought he was affronted: But as the Glory of all these Things is faded by the Light of the Gospel, so the Desires of them are to be mortified by the Laws of Christianity, the Mind is to be freed of these sordid Entertainments, and to be taken up with more pure and spiritual Delights, with intellectual Pleasures, with the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, with the Glory of Conquest (not over other Men, but) over ourselves, with the Joys of GOD's Favour and the Peace of our own Conscience.

3. AND lastly; this Religion requires a larger Spirit, and a more noble and diffusive Charity than was prescribed by any other Religion. The Charity of a *Pagan* commonly extended no farther than his Family and Friends, or at most to his own City and Country; and that of the *Jews* to their own Nation and Religion only: But to love their Enemies was by both of them looked upon as so far from necessary, that it was thought impossible. Whereas this Institution requires us to love our very Enemies, and those that mortally hate us; to render Good for Evil; to embrace all the World in our Affections; to look upon all Mankind as our Brethren, the Children of one common



mon Parent; that there are no Men so filly, or peevish, so mean and contemptible, or so remote from us in Blood, Country, Manners, or Opinion, but we are to be ready to do all good Offices towards them; to oblige them by Kindness; and to conquer and overpower them by real Instances of Good-Will and endearing Carriage. This is the Sum of the Christian Law, and the peculiar Character of that Religion, at least, so far as concerns the Rule of Living.

THE second Thing remarkable in the Gospel is, the powerful Motives it makes Use of to provoke Men to an uniform Compliance with its Laws, and they are especially these three.

*First*, IT charms Men by a lively Draught of the Divine Goodness.

*Secondly*, IT provokes them by the Example of our Saviour.

*Thirdly*, IT enflames them by the Promise of eternal Life.

I. THE Gospel makes so lively a Representation of the Divine Goodness and Clemency, especially in the free Pardon, and total Abolition of all Sin past, that it powerfully works upon Men's Ingenuity, and melts them into a Compliance with the most difficult Terms that such Goodness can be capable of propounding. Do but think with yourself, if you had so far offended your Prince, and violated the Laws of your Country; that Majesty was exasperated, and Justice armed with Severity against you, so that you was under a terrible Sentence, and expected a speedy Execution; now if notwithstanding your Prince should condescend to make you an Offer of Pardon and full Re-stitution

stitution to your former Capacity upon certain Terms ; would you not be willing to enter upon a very difficult Service, and undertake the most hazardous Enterprize? Would you be nice and captious, or stand carping and capitulating? Nay would you not be enflamed with Resolution, spirited by Gratitude, and find yourself to become more than yourself, in such an Undertaking?

Now this is the Case, *Biophilus*: We have infinitely offended Almighty God in the whole Course of our Lives, and so are justly fallen under his Displeasure, insomuch that a Sentence of eternal Death is passed against us: Notwithstanding, in the Gospel an Overture of Reconciliation is made, and upon the Terms of true Faith He offers to receive us into Favour, that all our Sins, how many and great soever, shall be blotted out, and never come in Remembrance again; the Sentence shall be revoked ; we shall never be upbraided with our Follies ; no Cloud shall hang over us ; no ill Character be upon us ; but our Consciences shall be quiet, and God will everlastingly shine upon us. Now can any Man in this Case expostulate the Terms with God? Can he find in his Heart to complain of the Trouble of his Service, the Difficulty of Self-denial, or think it hard to be obliged to forgive other Men upon Condition of God's forgiving him? No surely ; he will heartily embrace the Propositions, will love and thank God with all his Soul, and rejoice in Difficulty itself, that he may give Proof of his Gratitude, and be only sorry that he can give no better Evidence of it. In a Word, he will be inflamed in his Resolutions, and winged in his Endeavours of serving and pleasing such a God: *A God of Mercy, rich in Mercy and Goodness, pardoning Iniquity,*  
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*Transgression and Sin*; forgiving old, and great, and the most disingenuous Sinners.

THE second Motive of the Gospel is the Example of our Saviour: This it sets before us, and by this it provokes us to a Compliance with his Laws. That He was the very Son of GOD, *the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Character of his Majesty*, Heb. i. 2. I have intimated before; and all the miraculous Glories of his Birth, Life, Resurrection, and Ascension to Heaven, have abundantly demonstrated it. Now that He should come down from Heaven to Earth, and there frame Himself to an exact Conformity to the afore-said Laws of the Gospel, is not a greater Instance of his admirable Self-humiliation, than of the incomparable Excellency, Wisdom, and Goodness of those Laws, in that they are such as GOD himself thought fit to be subject to, as well as to recommend to us.

FOR certainly no Man can be so absurd, as to account it a mean Drudgery to be conversant in that Way of Worshipping GOD which the Gospel teaches, seeing *Christ Jesus* Himself made it not only his Business, but his Delight.

No Man can be so fond as to admire Riches and Honours, and the Preferments of this World, which our Saviour could have had in the greatest Measure that is imaginable, if He had not despised them: No Man can be so madly passionate, as to think to revenge himself is a Point of Glory, when he observes the Son of GOD, who could have done it effectually, instead thereof, only praying for his Enemies: Nor can any Man be so mean spirited as either to be vainly puffed up with Prosperity, or sink under Adversity, Reproach, or the deepest



deepest Contempt imaginable, that sees the Son of God to be the poorest, meanest, and most ignominiously treated of all Men.

ALL this consider'd cannot but have the Force of a mighty Motive, and prevail upon all ingenious Persons *to cast away every Weight and the Sin that besets them, and to run with Patience and Courage the Race set before them*, Heb. xii. 1.

3. THE third Motive of the Gospel is the Promise of eternal Life to all those that frame themselves by these Rules. Whereas the best that other Men can hope for, is, to rot in their Graves, and everlastingly to be forgotten; (but that will not serve their Turn, for they shall certainly suffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire;) those, that live by the Laws of the Gospel, shall be raised again out of the Dust, and outlive the very Heavens in unspeakable Felicity.

Now, *Biophilus*, this is such a Thing, this living for ever is such a Motive, that it is able to make a Man to defy all Difficulty so far as even to be inflamed the more by the Apprehension of it.

AND this being plainly propounded in the Gospel as the great Wager to him that runs that Race, and withal being impossible to be obtained upon any other Terms, must needs make *the Yoke of Christ easy, and his Burthen light*, Matth. xi. 30. And so much for the second principal Point of Christianity.

*Bioph.* Now, *Sebastian*, you have increased my Wonder more than ever, though I must confess you have translated it to another Subject; whereas I suspected before the Possibility of complying

with those strict Laws of the Gospel, now I am as much amazed that any Body should complain of Difficulty in them, those Things considered which you have last represented.

*Sebast.* GOD be thanked for that Change; *Bio-philus*; but your Wonder will be heightned, when you consider also the Assistances that the Gospel affords us towards the Performance of what it requires, which is the third and last of those Things whereby I designed to represent the Sum of it to you; and (to be short) that consists principally in these two Things.

1. THE inward Assistance and Co-operation of GOD's Holy Spirit

2. THE outward Advantages of the Society of his Church.

1. HE that by his Son hath required such Things of us, namely spiritual Worship, Purity of Heart, and universal Charity, hath also promised by his Divine Power to co-operate with us in the Discharge of them; and then there can be no such Thing as Impossibility: For what is impossible to almighty Power? Or what Burthen can there be to complain of, when we have such an Helper?

THE Meaning is not, that GOD will do all for us without us, so that as we shall be only passive, as some have fancied: For then all the Acts of Piety would be GOD's Acts, not ours, and could be capable of no Praise or Reward: And besides, this could not be called Divine Assistance, but his Creation rather, since in such an Exertion of his own Omnipotency, he did wholly over-bear or supersede our Endeavours.

BUT

BUT the Meaning is, that whensoever any Man (in Contemplation of the Motives and Encouragements aforesaid) sets himself in earnest to comply with that which God hath made his Duty, he shall not only have the Benefit of a common Providence in upholding and strengthening the Powers of his Mind, nor only find the Effects of a more especial Providence in removing Obstacles, and making his Way easy to him; but by the vital Power and Efficacy of the Divine Spirit his Mind shall be more enlightened to see the Excellency of the Thing he goes about; his Will shall be confirmed and strengthened in its Choice and Resolution; his Affections quickened in the Pursuit and Execution of that Choice: And above all, his Heart shall be cheered in the whole Enterprize with unspeakable Joy, and many Times with an admirable and ravishing Prospect of the Glory that shall attend and crown his Performance.

THIS our Saviour promised to the Christian Church before He left the World *viz.* That He would this Way be *present with them to the End of the World*, Matt. xxviii. 20. And hereof He gave a great Earnest, when on the famous Day of *Pentecost* (Acts ii. 1.) the Holy Spirit came in a very prodigious Manner upon all the Apostles and Christians that were assembled together as the Representative and Seminary of his future Church; and it was done (amongst other Reasons) to give Assurance that he was mindful of his Promise, and that all Ages after might justly expect the Presence of his Spirit with them (though not so visible as in that extraordinary Instance) which accordingly good Men at all Times find true by comfortable Experience.



*Bioph.* THIS which you now tell me is the strangest Thing that ever I heard of in my Life. If this be true, it will be ridiculous to object Difficulty against the Christian Institution; for upon this Supposition it is plain there can be nothing but Sottishness of Obstinacy, Cowardice and Credulity to hinder a Man from observing the Laws of it. But I pray however, proceed in your Method, and shew me also, in the next Place, what are those external Helps which you intimated?

*Sebast.* THE external Advantage of this Religion is the Institution of a Christian Church; that is, the Son of GOD the Author of this Religion ordered that all those who embraced it, should not content themselves to live singly and separately, as if they were unconcerned one in another; but unite themselves into a Body of spiritual Polity; and that although they were to be respectively subject to the Civil Governments under which they lived (at least so far as the Laws of Men intrenched not upon those of his Religion) yet they were to be under a stricter Tie of Unity among themselves, and to become a distinct Corporation under peculiar Officers, as well as for peculiar Ends and Purposes. Nor was this a mere arbitrary or positive Law of his, and to be observed only because He has commanded it; but as it was enjoined with admirable Wisdom on his Part, so it was of singular Advantage to all his Disciples in innumerable Respects, some of which I am engaged to represent to you.

AND first the Constitution of this Society of a Church, was an excellent Expedient for the preserving the Doctrine of Christianity in the World, and for the Prevention both of Corruption and Errors in the Laws, and of Mistakes in the great  
Motives

Motives and Encouragements of this Religion. Hence the Church is called by the Apostle St. Paul, *The Pillar and Ground of Truth*, 1 Tim. iii. 15. Not that the Church properly gives Authority to the Doctrine of our Religion, for that it hath immediately from our Saviour Himself, and from the Miracles wrought by God to attest it; but because the Church was the Conservatory of the Books wherein the Doctrine was written, and a Witness of the Proofs made of the Divinity of it, and competent to secure us from Imposture, and to preserve those sacred Books that contained it as the Sum of our Religion. Accordingly it is observable, that in the Rage of *Pagan* Persecution, when the Enemies of this Religion grew to that Height of Pride and Confidence, as to promise to themselves to root out all Memory and Remains of Christianity, the Care and Zeal of this Society preserved this sacred *Depositum* of holy Scripture, entire to after-Ages, when otherwise private Persons would or might out of Fear and Weakness have delivered them up to be destroyed.

AGAIN, Secondly, This Way of incorporating Christians in a Society, was a more easy and ready Way for the Instruction of the several Persons of which that Society consisted, and necessary for the publishing, explaining, and inculcating the Doctrine and Laws of their Religion to them. For if our Saviour had appointed Pastors and not a Flock (unless he had made the former as numerous almost as the latter) it had been impossible that they should have instructed all his Disciples: But now he having appointed them to join together in a Body, the same Pastor and the same Labour that instructs one may instruct many. Now this is a great advantage to all the Disciples of this Religion,

gion, that those that cannot read and study, nor are capable of feeding themselves, God hath provided a way for their constant easier Instruction by the publick Ministry of the Gospel.

**MOREOVER,** Thirdly, By Means of such a Society and Officers appointed over it, there is Provision made for the Resolution of all Doubts and for the Ease and Satisfaction of perplexed Consciences. It is not to be supposed but that there are a great Number of well-meaning Men who may either want Ability to judge of several Things that may concern them, or may want Leisure to consider so maturely as a Difficulty may require, or may not be impartial enough in their own Case to guide their own Consciences; now for the Relief of such as these, it is of great Use to be in the Society where God hath appointed such to be Officers in it *who have the Spirit of the LORD upon them to preach good Tidings to the Meek, to bind up the Broken-hearted and to comfort those that mourn, Isai. lxi. 1, 2.* Such as have made it their Business to study the more difficult Points of Religion, that they may be able *to speak a Word in Season to him that fainteth, Isai. l. 4.* And whose Duty and Province it is not so much to make publick Harangues to the Flock, as by particular Application to remove Scruples, to solve Difficulties, and provide for Emergencies; and all this they may well be supposed to be able to do with great Sincerity and Impartiality, as also with great Authority, being here unto appointed by God himself, and assisted herein by the Holy Spirit.

*Fourthly,* THERE is this farther Advantage of a Church, that the Members of this Society, are not only more likely to animate and inflame one another in the Ways of Piety by mutual Example; but also being concerned in one another, as of the same



same Body, and for the Honour of their common Faith and Religion, are authorized to watch over one another, to correct the Erroneous, to admonish the Careless, to reprove the Vicious, to strengthen the Weak, to encourage the Good, and, in a Word, are obliged in an extraordinary Manner to all Offices of Charity towards one another.

ALL which together must needs be a mighty Means of securing both the Doctrine and Practice of Religion.

*Fifthly and Lastly,* THE Establishment of the Society of a Church, and thereby a Publick Worship, is an Expedient of unspeakable Comfort and Encouragement to all humble and modest Persons, and especially to such as are truly contrite and broken-hearted, in the addressing their Prayers to Almighty GOD, animating them against their Sense of the Guilt of their Sins, the Unworthiness of their Persons, the Imperfection of their Prayers, and affording them many Arguments of Hope for Success beyond what they could expect from their private Devotions.

WHILST they consider, in the first Place, that they are now in GOD's House, or *Court of Requests*, where He uses to give Audience to poor Suppliants.

AGAIN, That their Desires are put up by the Hands of GOD's own Minister, whom He hath appointed to present Petitions to Himself.

*Thirdly,* THAT their Prayers are not offered up singly but in Conjunction with the Devotions of so many other more holy Persons; so that they may hope to speed the better for such Company,  
and

and especially by the united Efficacy of so many ardent Affections.

AND, Lastly, The Faith and Hope of such Men is wonderfully strengthened by the Contemplation of the great Propitiation for Sin, made by our Saviour, and represented to their Eyes on the LORD's Table. All these Things were mightily esteemed by the Christians of old, and certainly are great Advantages.

AND thus I have now laid before you the peculiar Laws of the Gospel, and shewed you also the admirable Encouragements, and the singular Helps and Assistances GOD hath afforded us towards the Observance of those Laws, and the Prosecution of that Religion. Is there any Thing more I can serve you in?

*Biopb.* YES, plainly see there is a great deal more I may learn of you: But GOD be thanked, and I heartily thank you for what I have learned hitherto.

*Sebast.* WELL, good Night to you both, Gentlemen, I doubt it grows late.

*Phil.* I HOPE, good *Sebastian*, you are not weary of well-doing; I was unwilling to interrupt you in your Discourse hitherto, both because it exceedingly confirmed me in what (I thank GOD) I did believe already, and especially because I did not doubt of a good Issue of it upon my Neighbour; but I have all this while waited for an Opportunity to ask your Advice in a Case or two of very great Concernment. There are these two Things I would crave your Direction in:

*First,*

*First*, By what means a Man may maintain his Ground, and keep stable and stedfast in Religion in distracted Times?

AND, secondly, What Course he should take to maintain an even Temper and constant Chearfulness of Spirit under all the Accidents of Life?

*Sebast.* THOSE two Enquiries are both so necessary at all Times, and so peculiarly seasonable at this Time, that I should neglect myself as well as you, if I should not be willing to consider them with you. But I pray, in the first Place, let me know what you mean by Stability in Religion.

*Phil.* I DO not call Perseverance in an Error Stability, but Stubbornness and Obstinacy. The meaning of my first Question therefore is only how a Man shall be enabled to stand firm and right to the Truth of Religion, and whereof he hath had good Proof and Experience; so that he shall neither be always trying and seeking, and disputing and doubting on the one Hand, nor on the other in Danger to be hector'd out of his Conscience, nor wheedled and complemented out of it; that no Example of great Men, or of the Multitude, may bias him, nor Sophistry of cunning Men cheat Him of His Religion, no Atheistical Person droll or rally Him out of it, nor Scurrility make Him ashamed of it.

*Sebast.* I RECOMMEND to you these three or four Things.

1. IN the first Place, you know that your Religion, I mean that which you have been trained up in, the Church of *England*, and which you have always professed, is a scriptural Religion, *i. e.* such an



an one as hath not merely prescribed for itself by Custom (though it be certainly elder than those that do so) nor derived itself from that herdless Monster, unaccountable Tradition, no nor yet from the Subtily of human Philosophy (though it have more Reason to plead for itself than any other) but hath taken its Rise from Divine Revelation, and consequently as it is to be proved, so it is to be disproved thence, or nothing can be said to the Purpose against it.

THEREFORE my first Advice is, that you study the Holy Scripture diligently, and stick close to that; that, as St. Paul hath assured us, *is given by Inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished for all good Works,* 2 Tim. iii. 16. and from thence a Man may be able to give a Reason of the Hope that is in Him, 1 Pet. iii. 15. i. e. make a sufficient Apology for, and Defence of his Religion.

2. BUT if it shall happen that either any Thing in the Scripture should seem so obscure, or that the Sophistry of cunning Men should cast such a Mist before us that we are not able to determine ourselves what to do: Then, in the second Place, we are to resort to our spiritual Guides, which GOD hath set over us, who have trained us up in our Religion, to help us out.

THIS is also a Means of Stability of GOD's own appointing, for the Apostle hath told us; that GOD hath erected those Orders of Men in His Church, that we should not be as Children toss'd to and fro by every Wind of Doctrine, and by the cunning Craftiness of Men who lie in Wait to deceive, Ephes. iv. 14.

3. HE that would be stable in his Religion, must learn to condemn the present World, without which both the former advices will be utterly insignificant. If a Man have the World in Admiration, it will dazle his Eyes, blind his Judgment, bribe his Affections, and debauch his Conscience; for it cannot be but Religion, and the Things of another World, must be cheap with Him that over-values the present.

THEREFORE, *Philander*, if you and I would stick fast to our Principles, we must sit loose to the World, we must entertain no great Opinion concerning Wealth and Honour, but be content with little Things for the present, and comfort ourselves with the Expectation of great ones in another World. We must consider with ourselves how vain and empty those Things are, even in this Life, and whilst they are enjoy'd, and especially how they vanish, and are of no avail at all at the Day of Judgment: *We must look at the Things which are not seen, and are Eternal.* Then shall we be stable as the Centre of the Earth, unchangeable as the Heavens, brave and courageous, so as to scorn Allurements, condemn Danger, and be true to our real Interest, our Conscience, our God, and our Religion.

4. To these, in the last Place, we must join fervent and constant Prayer: For we are not to trust ourselves, but commend to Him the fixing our Minds and establishing our Hearts. He made and knows them, and He only can confirm and strengthen them against all the Temptations of the Devil; He can provide that we shall not be led into Temptation, or however, that no Temptation shall overtake us but what we shall be able to bear; He can deliver us from all the Snares that shall be laid

for us, and help us to elude all Sophistry; and, in a Word, can upon Emergency, and in Time, bestow upon us such a Spirit and Wisdom as none of our Adversaries shall be able to withstand, Luke xxi. 15.

THESE, *Philander*, are the most effectual Things I can think of for the present, in answer to your first Question.

*Phil.* I THANK you heartily, *Sebastian*, for the great Satisfaction you have given me; and I shall make it both my own Care, and the Matter of my Prayer to GOD, that neither the Levity of my own Mind, nor the Importunity of others, shall tempt me from the good old Way.

AND now, be pleased, as briefly as the Case will bear, to resolve me also in my second Inquiry, namely, by what Means I may maintain a constant Chearfulness of Spirit in the Course of Christianity? You made it evident at the Beginning of this present Conference, that there is such a Thing attainable, and you will not wonder that I am inquisitive after so inestimable a Good.

*Sebast.* THIS second Inquiry of yours, *Philander*, is no less useful than the former; for not only the Happiness of a Man's own Life depends upon it, but the Reputation of Religion itself is very much concerned in the Temper of Spirit which he expresses under it.

Now in order to the determining the Means of settled Peace and an even Temper of spiritual Comfort, it is necessary that we discover the several Causes of the Interruption thereof, and when



we have found them, if we can apply proper Remedies to each, then we shall do your Business.

As for the former, *viz.* the Causes of the Unevenness of a Christian's Spirit, or the Interruptions of his spiritual Comfort, they are easily found out, and I do not doubt but they may be reckoned to be these four following :

NAMELY, either, 1. Unevenness or Irregularity of Life : Or,

2. UNDUE Apprehensions of God : Or,

3. SAD Accidents externally : Or,

4. MELANCHOLY of Body.

1. IN the first Place, I account the Irregularity of Men's Lives to be the most ordinary Cause of the Unevenness of their Comfort.

ALL virtuous Actions have Peace and Tranquillity belonging to them : On the contrary, all vicious Actions are naturally uncomfortable ; for besides the Infamy that attends them, they have Guilt inseparably adheres to them ; and GOD's Displeasure entailed upon them. For as He can never either hate Virtue or love Vice without a flat Contradiction to his own Nature, so neither can He or will He frown upon the one, or shine upon the other.

Now therefore if a Man be habitually vicious, he must needs be habitually sad and miserable. And if a Man be habitually holy, and maintains a constant Course of Piety and virtuous Actions, he will be habitually comfortable, and under a constant

stant Ray of Light and Glory. But if a Man be up and down in his Life, sometimes good and sometimes bad; he cannot expect that his Comforts should be more constant than he himself is.

IN this Case therefore the Disease leads to the Remedy, he that would maintain an even Peace in his Conscience, must be sure to maintain an even Course of Virtue and Piety in his Life. For it is not only impossible to secure the former without the latter, but it is ridiculous to pretend to it; nay farther, if it should happen that any Man found his Heart chearful upon other Terms, he would have just Cause to suspect a Delusion of the Devil.

GOD is constantly of the same Mind, Religion is constant and settled; therefore there can be no Way to constant Comfort in the one, or Hopes in the other, but by being constant to our Duty; nor can there be any Cause of Uncertainty, but the Unsettledness of our own Hearts. Let the Man therefore that aims at a settled Peace, be sure to be constant in his Duty, that it become not only a Bias upon him, but the very Method and Habit of his Life; and let foolish People, if they will, call this a Road of Religion; if it be a Road, it is certainly the narrow one that leads to Life; for never is Religion as it should be, 'till it becomes thus natural and habitual: And he that takes this Course, shall effectually secure himself against the first Cause of Uncomfortableness.

2. THE second Cause of Spiritual Dejection I reckon to be undue Apprehensions of GOD, and this generally goes a great Way in the Disquiets of well-meaning but weak People. For whereas, if Things be rightly considered, the very first No-  
tion

tion of a GOD is an everlasting Spring of Hope, and the right Understanding of his Goodness is the great Sweetner of a Man's Spirits, and that which principally disposes him to Chearfulness; it is common with weak People either to receive such Impressions from others, or ignorantly to frame such an Image of GOD in their own Minds as they must eternally hate, but cannot possibly love. And if the Thoughts of GOD be unpleasant to them, it must needs follow that all the Duties of Religion must go on heavily, and when they have done, their Hopes must be flat, and all about them looks melancholy.

THE principal Thing I aim at in this Place, is when Men have such a Notion of GOD as renders his Actions as necessary as his Nature, and because He was from Eternity, and could not but be, therefore they conceit He cannot but do whatsoever is done as necessarily as He exists; and so unawares they set a surly and rigid Fate over themselves, instead of a wise and good GOD. For in Pursuance of this Notion, they conclude He must be just to Extremity, and that He is bound to vindicate Himself rigorously, so that He cannot abate or remit of his own Right, but must exact the utmost Farthing.

AND tho' there be a Mediator and a Satisfaction spoken of in the Gospel, yet the Apprehension of such a supreme Being is able to render even that Remedy suspicious, or however to make a Man's Heart ach and tremble all the Days of his Life; but to be sure he can take no Delight in GOD, whatever Hopes he may have in a Saviour.

AGAIN, there is a third very common Occasion of Uncomfortableness, namely, external Accidents



and Calamities, which frequently befall the best Men, and which either by their Sharpness discompose a Christian, or by the Multitude and Severity of them may tempt him to question how he stands in the Favour of GOD who permits such Things to befall him, or at least by their often and yet uncertain Returns may make the Pulse of his Heart beat very uncertain.

AGAINST this there is no more proper Remedy than to rouse up ourselves, and act a generous Faith in GOD.

CONSIDERING, in the first Place, that this is his usual Method with those He loves best, and that Affliction is so far from being a Token of his Hatred, that on the contrary, there is no more dangerous Sign of GOD's having quite abandoned a Man, than for Him to use no Chastisement toward him. *If ye receive not Chastisement, saith the Apostle, ye are Bastards and not Sons.* And therefore we see the Eternal Son of GOD, when He came upon Earth and was in our Nature, was the most remarkable Instance of a *Man of Sorrows* that ever was in the World; insomuch that it is not easy to imagine what Calamity can befall any Man, which is not to be paralleled, if not exceeded in the Sufferings of our Saviour, and as if GOD had order'd it so on Purpose to this End, that no Man might complain of his Share, or especially think himself forsaken of GOD because of his Adversities.

IN the second Place, let us assure ourselves, that as all Afflictions come from GOD, so they shall certainly be made to work for Good to all those that love Him, Rom. viii. 28. For unless we humour ourselves, we may discover that there is hardly any Affliction befalls but what we may be better'd by,

by, even for the present; but there can be no Doubt but God both can and will turn it to our Advantage in the Upshot of Things: And therefore we have no Reason to be dejected upon such an Occasion.

It is more than half Way of the Cure to understand the Disease, and yet that is no more than to be aware that Melancholy is both the Cause and Effect, and that that alone is able to act all this Tragedy without any other Cause of Sadness. And that betrays itself notoriously in this, that such a Man can assign no Reason of his Trouble, but only he is troubled, and he is again troubled that he is so. Now if a Man could give any such Account of his uncomfortable Fears as were sufficient to satisfy any Man besides himself, then it would be reasonable not to charge them upon Melancholy, but upon those just Causes; but if no such Causes be assignable, then it is manifestly Temper that is in Fault without Guilt or Danger; and this one Thing considered is able to relieve a Man out of his Perplexity, and his Mind may arrive at some tolerable Measure of Chearfulness, even in the midst of this bodily Infirmary.

BUT if the Understanding of such a Man be too weak, or the Disease of Melancholy be too strong upon him to be cured this Way, then the next Thing to be done, (after the Use of Physick for the Body) is to resort to some able and experienced Physician of Souls, and sincerely to lay open the State of his Conscience to him: And having so done, to rest upon the Judgment of that other Person, seeing he is not able to judge for himself, or not willing to rely upon his own Judgment.

AFTER

AFTER all, I would earnestly advise such a Man not to smother his Thoughts in his own Bosom; but by all Means to let his Heart take Air; for there is hardly any serious Person so weak and injudicious, that a melancholy Man had not better consult with than himself; nay, many Times the putting a Question to a Post or Pillar, will help him to an Answer better than revolving of it altogether in his own Breast; but especially it is to be recommended to him, that he give not himself up to Solitude and Retirement, which thickens the Blood; and feeds the Disease, but that he frequent the Company and Conversation of good Men.

AND thus, I think, *Philander*, I have satisfied your second Enquiry, and have done it more largely than I intended, or than you expected. And now, once again, good Night.

*Phil.* Good Night heartily, *Sebastian*.

6 JY 64

*End of the Winter-Evening Conference.*





EXTRACTS

FROM THE

WORKS

OF

Dr. *ROBT. LEIGHTON,*

*Sometime Archbishop of Glasgow.*

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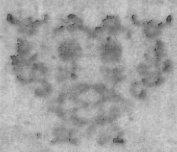
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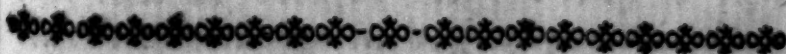
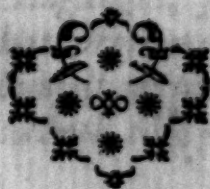
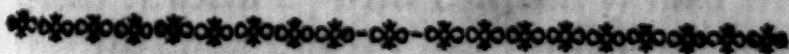
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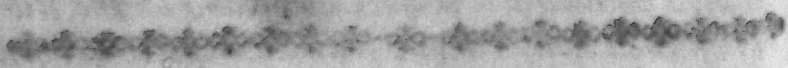
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T O T H E  
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**T**HE Discourses here published, are but a small Taste of a great many more that were written by the same most Reverend Author. He never appeared in Print upon any Occasion in his whole Life, and tho' few Men have been more solidly learned in the whole Compass of Learning, than he was, to which he added a perfect Command of the Purity of the Latin Tongue; and a more than ordinary Knowledge of the Greek, Hebrew, and other Oriental Languages, yet he never once broke through that profound Humility, which made him judge himself neither fit to write, nor speak, tho' he did both to a great Perfection.

THE Author was so averse to all Controversies, that he thought the best Way to refine some low Notions, was to graft great and high Thoughts on them; and therefore instead of attacking them, or disputing about them, he studied

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## The PREFACE.

died to improve them to some pious Reflection. If the Meanness of Stile, which then prevailed, threw him into a little more Negligence than agrees with that Chaſtneſs of Stile which now takes Place, it is what all Men, who have raiſed the Strain of their Language, have fallen into at firſt: But I will not pretend to excuſe that, which (I confeſs) I admire, and by which I myſelf have been ſo ſenſibly improved.

THE Author was the Delight and Wonder of all that knew him, his Thoughts were noble, and his Expreſſions beautiful, his Geſture and Pronounciation (peculiar to himſelf) had a Gravity, a Majeſty, and yet a Sweetneſs in them, that many ſevere Judges have often ſaid, were beyond all that they had ever ſeen at home or abroad.

THAT which gave the greateſt Authority to all he ſaid, was, that his Life was ſuch a continued Courſe of the ſublimeſt Virtue, and the moſt elevated Piety, that have appeared in this Age. Thoſe who have known him the moſt, and the longeſt, have often ſaid, that in a Courſe of many Years Acquaintance, they ſcarcely ever ſaw him once out of that deeply ſerious State in which they themſelves wiſhed to be found in their laſt Minutes.

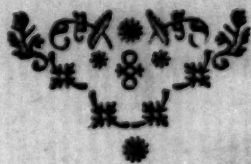
THIS may look ſomewhat high to thoſe who knew him not: But thoſe who did know him,  
and



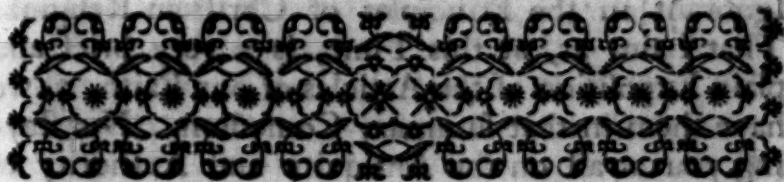
## THE PREFACE.

*and are yet alive, will, I am confident, justify the Truth of this short Character.*

*To conclude, I, who reckon, that the Knowledge I had of him for some Years, the few Sermons I heard him preach, and the many of his composing which I have read, will be no small Article of the Account I must render at the last and dreadful Day, have thought it one Part of my Duty to be instrumental to communicate these to others, who I hope will profit more by them, than I myself have been able yet to do. And in this Hope and Assurance I recommend those Discourses and the Readers of them, to the Blessing and Grace of Almighty GOD through his Son Jesus Christ our LORD.*



6 JY 64

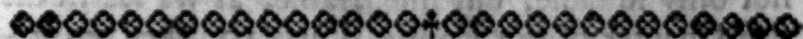


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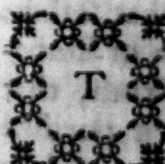
OF THE

# BELIEF.



I TIM. iii. 9.

*Holding the Mystery of Faith in a pure  
Conscience.*


**T** HAT which was the Apostle's Practice,  
 as he expresses it, I Cor. ix. 22. is the  
 standing Duty of all the Ministers of  
 the same Gospel, *To the Weak to become  
 as weak, to gain the Weak, and all  
 Things to all Men, that by any Means they may save  
 some.*



*some.* And one main Part of the Observance of that Rule, is descending to the Instruction of the most Ignorant in the Principles of Christian Religion. That I aim at, at this Time, is a very brief and plain Exposition of the Articles of our Faith, as we have them in that summary Confession. Not staying you at all on the Antiquity and Authority of it, both which are confessed; whether it was penn'd by the Apostles, or by others in their Time, or soon after it, it doth very clearly and briefly contain the main of their Divine Doctrine.

BUT though it be altogether consonant with the Scriptures, yet not being a Part of the Canon of them, I choose these Words as pertinent to our intended Explication of it; they are indeed here, as they stand in the Context, a Rule for Deacons; but without Question, taken in general, they express the great Duty of all that are Christians.

You see clearly in them a rich Jewel, and a precious Cabinet fit for it; *the Mystery of Faith* laid up, and kept in a *pure Conscience*. And these two are not only suitable, but inseparable, as we see in the first Chapter of this Epistle, Verse 10, they are preserved and lost together, they suffer the same Shipwreck; the casting away of the one is the Shipwreck of the other, if the one perish the other cannot escape. Every Believer is the Temple of God, and as the Tables of the Law were kept in the Ark, this *pure Conscience* is the Ark that *holds the Mystery of Faith*: You think you are Believers, you do not question that, and would take it ill that others should; it is very hard to convince Men of Unbelief directly; but if you believe this Truth, that the only Receptacle of saving Faith is a purified Conscience, then I beseech you question yourselves concerning that; being truly answered in it, it will

will resolve you touching your Faith, which you are so loth to question. Are your Consciences pure? Have you a living Hatred and Antipathy against all Impurity? Then sure Faith is there; for it is the peculiar Virtue of Faith *to purify the Heart*, *Acts* xv. and the Heart so purified is the proper Residence of Faith, where it dwells and rests as in its natural Place. But have you Consciences that can lodge Pride, or Lust, or Malice, or Covetousness, and such like Pollutions? Then be no more so impudent as to say, you believe, nor deceive yourselves so far as to think you do. The Blood of *Christ* never speaks Peace to any Conscience, but the same *that it purifies from dead Works, to serve the living God*: As that Blood is a Sacrifice to appease God's Wrath, so it is a Laver to wash our Souls, and to serve both Ends; it is as was the Blood of legal Sacrifices, both offered up to God, and sprinkled upon us, as both are expressed in the Apostle's Words there; do not think that God will throw this Jewel of Faith into a Sty or Kennel, a Conscience full of Defilement and Uncleaness. Therefore if you have any Mind to the Comforts and Peace that Faith brings with it, be careful to lodge it where it delights to dwell, *in a pure Conscience*: Notwithstanding, the unbelieving World mocks the Name of Purity; yet study you above all the Purity and Holiness, which may make your Souls a fit Abode for Faith, and that Peace which it worketh, and that Holy Spirit that works both in you.

FAITH is either the Doctrine which we believe, or that Grace by which we believe that Doctrine: Here I conceive it is both met and united in the Soul, as they say of the Understanding in the Schools; Faith apprehending its proper Object: *Faith is kept in a pure Conscience*, that is, both that  
pure

pure Doctrine of the Gospel which Faith receives, and that Faith which receives it, are together fitly placed and preserved, when they are laid up *in a pure Conscience*. The Doctrine of Faith cannot be received into, nor laid up in the Soul, but by that Faith that believes it; and that Faith hath no Being without believing that Doctrine, and both are fitly called the Mystery of Faith; the Doctrine is mysterious, and it is a mysterious Work to beget Faith in the Heart to receive it; for the Things we must believe are very high and heavenly, and our Hearts are earthly and base 'till the Spirit renew them. In our Confession of Faith we have both expressed: The first Word is a Profession of Faith, which receives the Doctrine as true, *I believe*, and the Articles themselves contain the Sum of the Doctrine believed; and if we that profess this Faith, have within us pure Consciences, wherein the Mystery of Faith, the Doctrine of Faith believed, and the Grace of Faith believing it, both together may be preserved; then is the Text compleatly answered in the present Subject.

REMEMBER then, since we profess this Faith, which is the proper Seat of Faith? Not our Books, or our Tongues only, or Memories, or Judgment, but our Conscience; and not our natural Conscience defiled and stuffed with Sin, but renewed and sanctified by Grace, *holding the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience*.

[ *I believe in GOD the Father* ]

FAITH, taking it as comprehensively as we can, is no other but a supernatural Belief of GOD, and Confidence in Him, whether we call GOD, or the Word of GOD, the Object of Faith; there is no material



material Difference, for it is GOD in the Word, as revealed by the Word, that is that Object: It is all one whether we say it is *Christ* or the Promises, for it is *Christ* revealed and held forth in the Promises, that Faith lays Hold on; *in Him are all the Promises of GOD, yea, and in Him, Amen.* So that it is one Act of Faith that lays Hold on *Christ*, and on the Promises; for they are all one; He is in them, and therefore Faith rests on them, because they include *Christ*, who is our Rest and our Peace, as a Man at once receives a Ring, and the precious Stone that is set in it.

THAT Confidence which this Expression bears, believing in GOD, supposes certainly (as all agree) a right Belief concerning GOD, both that He is, and what He is, according as the Word reveals Him, especially what He is relating to us; these three we have together, *Heb. xi. 6. He that cometh to GOD, must believe that GOD is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that seek Him.* 1. That He is. 2. To trust his Word, believing that He is true to his Promises, *a Rewarder of them that seek Him.* 3. Upon these follows coming to Him, which is that Reliance and Resting of the Soul upon Him, which results from that right Belief concerning Him, and trusting the Testimony of his Word, as it reveals Him.

WE have discoursed of the Attributes of GOD elsewhere, as also of the Trinity, which is expressed in these Words; *I believe in GOD the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* That sublime Mystery is to be cautiously treated of, and rather humbly to be admired, than curiously dived into. The Day will come (truly a Day, for here we are beset with the nightly Shades of Ignorance) wherein *we shall see Him as He is.* In the mean Time let us devoutly

voutly worship Him, as He has revealed Himself to us; for this is the true Way to that heavenly Country, *where we shall see Him Face to Face.* And it is our Interest here to believe the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, and to trust in them as such; for this is the Spring of all our Hope, that the Middle of the Three became our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit our Guide and Teacher, and *the Father reconciles us to Himself by the Son, and renews us by the Spirit.*

[ *Father* ]

**FIRST** the Father of his only begotten Son *Christ*, and through Him our Father by the Grace of Adoption. And so *Christ* does clearly insinuate, *I ascend to my Father, and your Father, my GOD, and your GOD.* He says, not to our Father, but *to my Father, and your Father*; first mine, and then yours through Me.

[ *Almighty,* ]

**ABLE** in Himself to do all Things, and the Source of all Power in others, all the Power in the Creature being derived from Him; so that it cannot altogether equal His, nor resist Him, no nor at all be without Him. Whosoever they be that boast most in their own Strength in any Kind, and swell highest in Conceit of it, are yet but as a brittle Glass in the Hand of God; He cannot only break it to Pieces by the Strength of his Hand, but if He do but withdraw his Hand from supporting it, it will fall and break of itself.

[ *Maker* ]

[ *Maker of Heaven and Earth :* ]

THE Son and the Spirit were, with the Father, Authors of the Creation ; but it is ascribed to the Father particularly, in Regard to the Order and Manner of their Working. Whether natural Reason may evince the Creation of the World, we will not dispute ; yet there is enough in Reason to answer all the Cavils of prophane Men, and to justify the Truth of this we believe. However we must endeavour to believe it by Divine Faith, according to that of the Apostle, *By Faith we believe that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God.* And this is the first Article we meet with in the Scriptures, and our Faith is put to it in a very high Point in the very Entrance.

IN the Beginning GOD made the Heaven and the Earth, speaking like Himself ; it is not proved by Demonstrations, nor any Kind of Arguments, but asserted by the Authority of GOD : And with that which begins the Books of the Law, *John* begins his Gospel ; that upon his Word, who by his Word made the World, we may believe that He did so.

THIS is fitly added to the Title of Almighty, as a Work of Almighty Power, and therefore a clear Testimony of it, and both together will suit with our Profession of believing in Him ; for this is a main Support of our Faith, to be persuaded of his Power on whom we trust. *Our GOD is able to deliver us,* (said they :) And *Abraham* (the Apostle says) *offered up his Son, accounting* (or reasoning with himself, or laying his Reckoning) *that GOD was able to raise him from the Dead.*

WE



WE make more bold to speak out our own Questioning the Love of GOD, because we think we have some Reason in that from our own Unworthiness; but if we would sound our own Hearts, we should find in our Distrusts, some secret Doubtings of GOD's Power: *Can GOD prepare a Table in the Wilderネス?* Said they; though accustomed to Miracles, yet still unbelieving. We think we are strongly enough persuaded of this; but our Hearts deceive us. It is not for nothing that GOD by his Prophets so often inculcates this Doctrine of his Power, and this great Instance of it, the Creation, when He promises great Deliverances to his Church, and the Destruction of their Enemies, *Isa. xlv. 12. and li. 12.* What can be too hard for Him, that found it not too hard to make a World of Nothing? If thou look on the Publick, the Enemies of the Church are strong; if on thyself, thou hast indeed strong Corruptions within, and strong Temptations without; yet none of these are Almighty, as thy GOD is. What is it thou wouldst have done, that He cannot do, if He think fit? And if He think it not fit, if thou art one of his Children thou wilt think with Him, thou wilt reverence his Wisdom, and rest satisfied with his Will. This is Believing indeed; the Rolling all our Desires and Burdens upon an Almighty GOD; and where this is, it cannot choose but establish the Heart in the Midst of Troubles, and give it a Calm within in the Midst of the greatest Storms.

AND try what other Confidences you will, they shall prove vain and lying in the Day of Trouble: He that thinks to quiet his Mind, and find Rest by worldly Comfort, is, as *Solomon* compares his Drunkard, *as one that lies down in the Midst of the Sea*, that sleepeth on the Top of a Mast; he can have but unsettled Repose that lies there, *but he that*  
*trusteth*

*trusteth in the LORD, is as Mount Sion that cannot be removed.* When we lean on other Props besides GOD, they prove broken Reeds, that not only fail, but pierce the Hand that leans on them.

THERE is yet another Thing in this Article, that serves farther to uphold our Faith, that of Necessity He that made the World by his Power, doth likewise rule it by his Providence. It is so great a Fabrick, as cannot be upheld and governed by any less Power, than that which made it. He did not frame this World, as the Carpenter his Ship, to put it into other Hands, and look no more after it; but as He made it, He is the continual Pilot of it, sits still at the Helm and guides it, yea He commands the Winds and Seas, and they obey Him.

[*And in JESUS CHRIST*]

THE two great Works of GOD by which He is known to us, are Creation and Redemption, which is a new or second Creation. The Son of GOD, as GOD, was with the Father, as the Worker of the former; but as GOD-Man, He is the Author of the latter. St. *John* begins his Gospel with the first, and from that passes on to the second. *In the Beginning was the Word, Verse 1. By Him were all Things made.* But Verse 14, the other is expressed, *The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us; had a Tent like ours, and made of the same Materials.* He adds, *He was full of Grace and Truth,* and for that End, as there follows, *That we might all receive of his Fulness, Grace for Grace.* And this is that great Work of new Creation: Therefore the Prophet *Isaiah*, foretelling this great Work from the LORD's own Mouth, speaks of it in these Terms, *That I may plant the Heavens,*

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and lay the Foundations of the Earth, and say unto Sion, *thou art my People*. That making of a new People to Himself in *Christ*, is as the framing of Heaven and Earth. Now this Restoremēt by *Jesus Christ*, supposes the Ruin and Misery of Man by his Fall, that Sin and Death under which he is born. This we all seem to acknowledge, and well we may, for we daily feel the woful Fruits of that bitter Root; but the Truth is, the greatest Part of us are not fully convinced of this Gulph of Wretchedness into which we are fallen: If we were, there would be more Cries amongst us, for Help to be drawn out, and delivered from it; this great Deliverer, this Saviour would be of more Use, and of more Esteem with us.

THE Disunion and Distance that Sin hath made betwixt GOD and Man, cannot be made up but by a Mediator, one to come betwixt; so that there is now no believing in GOD the Father, but by believing in *Jesus* his Son; no appearing without Horror, yea without Perdition, before so just a Judge highly offended, but by the Intervention of so powerful a Reconciler, able to satisfy and appease Him; and He tells us plainly, that we mistake not our Way: *No Man comes unto the Father but by Me*.

FEW are our Thoughts concerning GOD, and returning to Him; but if we have any, this is our Unhappiness, that naturally we are subject to leave out *Christ* in them.

WE think there is something to be done, we talk of Repentances, and Prayers, and Amendments, though we have not these neither; but if we had these, there is yet one Thing necessary above all these, that we forget. There is absolute  
Need



Need of a Mediator, to make our Peace, and reduce us into Favour with GOD; one that must for that End do and suffer for us, what we can neither do nor suffer; though we could shed Rivers of Tears, they cannot wash out the Stain of any one Sin; yea, there is Pollution in our very Tears; so that they themselves have Need to be washed in the Blood of *Jesus Christ*.

JESUS CHRIST] Our anointed Saviour, anointed to be our King, our great High-Priest, and our Prophet, and in all these our Saviour: Our Prophet, to teach us the Way of Salvation; our Priest, to purchase it for us; and our King, to lead and protect us in the Way, and to bring us safe to the End of it. Thus is his Name full of Sweetness and Comfort. *It is a rich Ointment*, and in the Preaching of the Gospel *an Ointment poured forth*, diffusing its fragrant Smell, *for which the Virgins*, the chaste purified Souls of Believers, *love Him*; such as have their Senses exercised, as the Apostle speaks; their spiritual Smelling not obstructed with the Pollutions of the World, but quick and open to receive and be refreshed with the Smell of this precious Name of *Jesus Christ*.

[*His only Son*]

OTHER Sons He hath, Angels and Men by Creation and Adoption, but this his only begotten Son as GOD, by eternal Generation; and as Man peculiarly the Son of GOD, both in regard of his singular unexampled Conception by the Holy Ghost, and by that personal Union with the Deity, which accompanied that Conception, and by that Fulness of all Grace which flowed from that Union. The unfolding of these would require a long Time, and

after all, more would remain unsaid and unconceived by us ; *for his Generation who can declare?*

LET us remember this, that our Sonship is the Product of his, *Jo. i. 14. He is the only begotten Son of GOD,* and yet, Verse 12. *To as many as received Him He gave this Privilege, to be the Sons of GOD.*

[ *Our LORD,* ]

BOTH by our loyal Subjection to Him, and our peculiar Interest in Him, these go together ; willing Subjection and Obedience to his Laws is an inseparable Companion, and therefore a certain Evidence of our Interest in his Grace.

[ *Conceived by the Holy Ghost,* ]

THIS is that great *Mystery of Godliness*, GOD manifested in the *Flesh* ; the King of Glory after a Manner divesting Himself of his Royal Robes, and truly putting on the Form of a Servant, the Holy Ghost framing Him a Body in the Virgin's Womb ; that by that miraculous and peculiar Manner of Birth, He might be declared more than Man, as being a Way more congruous both to the Greatness of his Person, and the Purity of his Human Nature.

[ *Born of the Virgin Mary,* ]

HE was not only of the same Nature with Man, which he might have been by a new created Humanity, but of the same Stock, and so a fit Saviour, a near Kinsman, as the Word that in *Hebrew*

*brew* is a Redeemer, doth signify, Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh. We see then the Person of our Mediator very fit for that his Office, having both the Natures of the Parties at Variance which he was to reconcile. And this happy Meeting of GOD and Man in the Person of *Christ*, to look no further, was a very great Step to the Agreement, and a strong Pledge of its Accomplishment; to see the Nature of Man that was an Enemy, received into so close Embraces with the Deity, within the compass of one Person, promised a Reconcilement of the Persons of Men unto GOD; there the Treaty of Peace began, and was exceedingly promoted by that very Beginning, so that in it, there was a sure Presage of the Success. Had GOD and Man treated any where but in the Person of *Christ*, a Peace had never been concluded, yea it had broke up at first; but being in Him, it could not fail, for in Him there were already one, one Person, so there they could not but agree, *GOD was in Christ reconciling the World to Himself.*

2. CONSIDERING the Work to be done in this Agreement, as well as the Persons to be agreed; it was altogether needful that the Undertaker should be GOD and Man; the Meditation was not a bare Matter of Word, but there was such a Wrong done as required a Satisfaction should be made, (we speak not what GOD might absolutely have done, but what was to be done suitable to GOD's End, that was for the joint Glory of Justice and Mercy, *That Mercy and Truth might meet, and Righteousness and Peace kiss each other*;) and because the Party offending was not able for it, He that would effectually make Suit for him, must likewise satisfy for him. And this *Jesus Christ* did. Now that



that He might do this, it was necessary that He should be GOD able to save, and Man fit to save Man; Man that He might suffer, and GOD that his Suffering might be satisfying; Man that He might die, and GOD that his Death might have Value to purchase Life to us.

THE Son was fit to be incarnate for his Work, the middle Person in the Godhead to be Man's Mediator with GOD. That we had lost was the Dignity of the Sons of GOD, and therefore his only Son was only fit to restore us to it; the Beauty defaced in us was the Image of GOD, therefore the repairing and reimparting it was a fit Work for his purest and perfectest Image, his Son, the Character of his Person.

Now this Incarnation of the Word, the Son of GOD, is the Foundation of all our Hopes; it is the Sense of that great Promise, *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head*; and many others of the same Substance in the Prophets. It is the great Salvation so often foretold, and so long expected by the Jews. When this was fulfilled that a Virgin did conceive by the Holy Ghost, *Then did the Heavens drop down Righteousness from above; and the Earth bring forth Salvation.*

[Suffered under Pontius Pilate,]

THOUGH all his Life was one continual Act of Suffering, from his lying in the Manger, to his hanging on the Cross; yet because of the Briefness of this Confession, as likewise because this Act was the greatest, and most remarkable of his Sufferings, and the Scripture itself doth (as such) mention it most frequently, therefore it is here immediately subjoin'd to the Article of his Birth.

It is not for nothing that we have the Name of the *Roman* Judge here expressed, under whom He suffered; tho' it is nothing to his Credit, yet it is to the Credit of Divine Wisdom, even this, considering the Nature and End of *Christ's* Death, being to satisfy a pronounced Sentence of Justice, tho' for others, it was a very agreeable Circumstance that He should not be suddenly, or tumultuarily murdered, but be judicially, tho' unjustly, condemned.

[Crucified,]

BESIDES it made his Suffering more publick and solemn; and the Divine Providence ordered this, that He should suffer under a *Roman* Judge, and so fall under this *Roman* Kind of Punishment, being in itself a very shameful and painful Kind of Death, and by the Sentence of the Law accursed, that we might have the more Evidence of our Deliverance from that Shame, and Pain, and Curse that was due to us; *The Chastisement of our Peace was upon Him*, says the Prophet, *and by his Stripes are we healed.*

[Suffered,]

THAT He died, and what Kind of Death you see is expressed, but as many particular Sufferings of his Body are not here mentioned, so none of those of his Soul, but all comprehended in this general Word, *He suffered.* Those were too great to be duly expressed in so short a Form, and therefore are better expressed by supposing them, and including them only in this, *He suffered.* As he that drew the Father among others, beholding the Sacrificing of his own Daughter, signified the Grief of the rest in their Gestures, and Visages, and Tears,

Tears, but drew the Father veiled; so here the Crucifying and Death of our Saviour are expressed, but the unspeakable Conflicts of his Soul are veiled under the general Term of Suffering. But sure that invisible Cup that came from his Father's Hand, was far more bitter than the Gall and Vinegar from the Hand of his Enemies; the piercing of his Soul far sharper than the Nails and Thorns; He could answer these sweetly with, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*; but these other Pangs drew from Him another Kind of Word, *My GOD, my GOD, why hast Thou forsaken me?*

[Died,]

No less would serve, and therefore He was obedient even unto the Death, as the Sentence against us did bear, and the Sacrifices of the Law did prefigure. When the Sacrifices drew back and went unwillingly to the Place; the Heathens accounted it an ill presage: Never was Sacrifice more willing than Christ, *I lay down my Life for my Sheep*, (says He) *and no Man taketh it from Me. As a Sheep before the Shearers is dumb, so He opened not his Mouth.* Isa. l. *He gave his Back to the Smilers. For this Hour came I into the World*, (says He.)

AND this his Death is our Life, though by it we are not freed from Temporal Death; yet, which is infinitely more, we are delivered from Eternal Death, and which is yet more, entitled to Eternal Life; And therefore do no more suffer Temporal Death as a Curse, but enjoy it as a Blessing, and may look upon it now (such as are in Christ) not only as a Day of Deliverance, but of Coronation; the Exchange of our present Rags for white Robes, and a Crown that fadeth not away.

[Buried]



## [Buried,]

FOR the further Assurance of his Death, and Glory of his Resurrection, as likewise to commend the Grave to us, as now a very sweet Resting Place; he hath warmed the cold Bed of the Grave to a Christian, that he need not fear to lie down in it, nor doubt that he shall rise again, as we know that He did.

## [Descended into Hell,]

THE Conceit of the Descent of *Christ's* Soul into the Place of the Damned, to say no more nor harder of it, can never be made the necessary Sense of these Words; nor is there any Ground in Scripture, or any due End of such a Descent, either agreed on, or at all alledgeable to persuade the chusing it as the best Sense of them. Not to contest other Interpretations, I conceive, with Submission, that it means his Burial: Or rather, That when his Body was laid in the Grave, his Soul went into Paradise.

THESE are great Things, that are spoken concerning *Jesus Christ*, his Birth and Sufferings, but the greater our Unhappiness if we have no Portion in them; to hear of them only, and to enjoy nothing of them is most miserable, and thus it is through our Unbelief; were it as common to believe in Him, as to repeat these Words, or to come to Church and hear this, then would you all make a pretty good Plea; but believe it, it is another Kind of Thing to believe than all that, or than any Thing that the most of us yet know. *My Brethren, do not deceive yourselves; that common Highway*

Highway Faith will not serve. You are for all that still Unbelievers in *Christ's* Account, and if so, for all the Riches of Comfort that are in Him, you can receive none from Him. It is a sad Word that He says, *Because ye believe not in Me, ye shall die in your Sins*; though I died for Sins not mine own, yet you remaining in Ungodliness and Unbelief, that shall do you no Good; ye shall die in your Sins. It is such a Faith as endears *Christ* to the Soul, unites it to Him, makes *Christ* and it one, that makes all that is his to become ours; then we shall conclude aright, *Christ* hath suffered, therefore I shall not. As he said to them that came to take Him, *Is it I you seek? Then let these go free.* So to the Law and Justice of GOD; seeing you have sought and laid hold on Me, and made Me suffer, let these go free, that lay hold on Me by Faith; if you have any Thing to say to them, I am to answer for them, yea I have done it already.

2. You that believe and live by this Death, be often reviewing it, and meditating on it, that your Souls may be ravished with the Admiration of such Love, and warmed with Love to Him. Other Wonders, as you say, last for a while, but this is a lasting Wonder, not to the ignorant, (the Cause of Wonder at other Things, is Ignorance indeed) but this is an everlasting Wonder to those that know it best, viz. to the very Angels. Let that loved *Jesus* be fixed in your Hearts, who for you was nailed to the Cross. *St. Bernard* wonders that Men should think on any Thing else: Sure it is great Folly to think and esteem much of any Thing here, after his Appearing; the Sun arising drowns all the Stars. And withal be daily Crucifying Sin in yourselves, be avenged on it for his Sake, and kill it because it killed Him.

3. WILL you think any Thing hard to do or suffer for Him, that undertook and performed so much for you? Know, that if you are not *Christ's*, but your own, you must look for as little of Him to be yours; if ye be your own, you must bear all your own Sins, and all the Wrath that is due to them; but if you like not that, and resolve to be no more your own, but *Christ's*, then what have you to do but chearfully to embrace, yea earnestly to seek all Opportunities to do him Service?

4. THESE are the Steps of *Christ's* Humiliation; look on them so, as to study to be like Him particularly in that; surely the Soul that hath most of *Christ*, hath most Humility. It is the Lesson He peculiarly recommends to us from his own Example, which is the shortest and most effectual Way of Teaching. *Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart.* One says well, *Let Man be ashamed to be any longer proud, for whom GOD Himself humbled Himself so low.* He became humble to expiate our Pride, and yet we will not banish that Pride that undid us, and follow that Way of Salvation which is Humility. *Jesus Christ* is indeed the Lilly of the Valleys; He grows no where but in the humble Heart.

[*Rose again the Third Day.*]

WHEN humbled to the lowest, then nearest his Exaltation, as *Joseph* in the Prison. He could die, for He was a Man, and a Man for that Purpose, that He might die; but He could not be overcome by Death, for He was GOD, yea by dying he overcame Death, and so shewed Himself truly the LORD of Life. He strangled that Lion in his own Den. The Whale swallowed *Jonah*, but it could not digest him, it was forced to cast him up again

at



at the appointed Time, the same with the Time here specified, wherein the Prophet was a Figure of this great Prophet *Jesus Christ*. The Grave hath a terrible Appetite, devours all, and still cries, *Give, Give*, and never hath enough, as *Agur* says; yet for all its Appetite, *Christ* was too great a Morfel for it to digest, too strong a Prisoner for all its Bars and Iron Gates to keep Him in.

He hath made a Breach through Death, opened a Passage on the other Side of it into Life, though otherwise indeed *Vestigia nulla retrorsum*. They that Believe, that lay hold on Him by Faith, they come through with Him, follow Him out at the same Breach, pass through Death into Heaven; but the rest find not the Passage out, (it is as the red Sea, passable only to the *Israelites*) therefore they must of Necessity sink through the Grave into Hell, through the first Death into the second, and that is the terriblest of all. That Death is indeed what one called the other, *The most terrible of all Terribles, The King of Terrors*.

Now the only Assurance of that happy second Resurrection to the Life of Glory hereafter, is the first Resurrection here to the Life of Grace. *Blessed are they that are Partakers of the first Resurrection, for on such the second Death hath no Power*; for the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ* is to the Believer, the Evidence of his Redemption compleated, that all was paid by *Christ* as our Surety, and so he set at Liberty, which the Apostle teaches us when he says, *He arose for our Righteousness*.

NOR is it only the Pattern and Pledge of a Believer's Resurrection, but it is the Efficient both of that

that last Resurrection of his Body to Glory, and of the first, of his Soul to Grace.

THE Life of a Believer flows from *Christ* as his Head, and is mystically one Life with his, and therefore so, as Himself expresseth it, *because I live ye shall live also*. Therefore is he called the *first begotten from the Dead, and the Beginning*, *Ἐκ πατρὸς πρωτόγονος*. He is first in all, and from Him spring all these Streams that *make glad the City of God*; therefore the Apostle in his Thanksgiving for our new Life and lively Hopes, leaves not out that, *Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; that is, the Conduit of all. And he expresses it in the same Place, that *We are begotten again to a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead*. But, alas! we rob ourselves of all that rich Comfort that is wrapt up in this, by living to ourselves and to the World, not having our Consciences purified from dead Works. How few of us are there that set that Ambition of *Paul* before us, *desiring above all Things to know Him, and the Power of his Resurrection*. To be made conformable, that is the Knowledge, as he there expresses it, a lively, experienced Knowledge of that Power.

2. THIS rightly considered, will answer all our Doubts and Fears in the hardest Times of the Church; when in its Deliverance, there appears nothing but Impossibilities; so low that its Enemies conclude, it shall never rise again; and its Friends are oppressed with fearing so much: Yet He that brought up his own Son *Jesus* from the Dead, can, and will restore his Church, for which He gave that, his only begotten Son to the Death. *Son of Man*, says He, *can these dry Bones live?* Thus often looks the Church's Deliverance, (which

is there the proper Sense) the Prophet answered most wisely, *LORD Thou knowest*, it is a Work only for Thee to know and to do, and by his Spirit they were revived, and as here it look'd hopeless, so the Disciples thought they were giving it over, and blaming almost their former Credulity, we thought this should have been He that should have delivered *Israel*; and besides all this, To-day is the third Day; true, the third Day was come, but it was not ended; yea He rose in the Beginning of it, though they yet knew it not, nor Him present to whom they spake; but toward the End of it, they likewise knew that He was risen, when He was pleased to discover Himself to them. Thus though the Enemies of the Church prevail so far against it, that it seems buried, and a Stone laid to the Grave's Mouth, yet it shall rise again, and at the very fittest, the appointed Time, as *Christ* the third Day. Thus the Church expresses her Confidence, *Hos. vi. 1, 2. In the third Day He will raise us up.* Whatsoever it suffers, it shall gain by it, and be more beautiful and glorious in its Restoremēt.

[*He ascended into Heaven,*]

HE rose again, not to remain on Earth as before, but to return to his Throne of Majesty, from whence his Love drew Him, according to his Prayer, *John xvii.* which was a certain Prediction of it. He had now accomplished the great Work He came for, and was therefore to be exalted to his former Glory; the same Person that before, but with the Surcrease of another Nature, which He had not before, and of a new relative Dignity, being to sit as King of his Church, which He had purchased with his Blood.



AND to express this it is added, that He sits at the Right Hand of GOD. By which is expressed, not only his matchless Glory, but his Dominion and Rule as Prince of Peace, the alone King of his Church, her supreme Lawgiver and mighty Protector, and Conqueror of all his Enemies, ruling his holy Hill of *Sion* with the Golden Scepter of his Word, and breaking his Enemies, the strongest of them in Pieces, with the Iron Rod of his Justice. They attempt in vain to unsettle his Throne, it is very far out of their Reach, as high as the Right-Hand of GOD; *For ever, O GOD, thy Throne is established in Heaven.* What Way is there for the Worms of this Earth to do any Thing against it?

As in these is the Glory of *Christ*, so they contain much Comfort of a Christian. In that very Elevation of our Nature to such Dignity, is indeed, as the Ancients speak, wonderful Condescension, that our Flesh is exalted above all the glorious Spirits, the Angels; and they adore the Nature of Man, in the Person of Man's glorified Saviour, the Son of GOD. This Exaltation of *Jesus Christ*, doth reflect a Dignity on the Nature of Mankind; but the Right and Possession of it is not universal, but is contracted and appropriate to them that believe on Him. *He took not on Him the Nature of Angels*, says the Apostle, but *the Nature of the Seed of Abraham*. He says, not the Nature of Man, though it is so, but of the Seed of *Abraham*, not so much because of his Descent from that particular Stock after the Flesh, as in the spiritual Sense of *Abraham's* Seed. The rest of Mankind forfeit all that Dignity and Benefit that arises to their Nature in *Christ*, by their Distance and Disunion from Him through Unbelief. But the Believer hath not only naturally one Kind of Being with the Humanity of *Christ*,

but is mystically one with the Person of *Christ*, with whole *Christ*, GOD-MAN; and by Virtue of that mysterious Union, they that partake of it, partake of the present Happiness and Glory of *Christ*, they have a real Interest in whatsoever He is and hath, in all his Dignities and Power, and in that Sense they that are justified are glorified.

IN sum, Believers have in this Ascending and Enthroning of *Christ*, unspeakable Comfort through their Interest in *Christ*, both in Consideration of his present Affection to them, and his effectual Intercession for them; and in the assured Hope this gives them of their own After-Happiness and Glory with Him.

1. IN all his Glory He forgets them not. He puts not off his Bowels with his low Condition here, but hath carried it along to his Throne; his Majesty and Love suit very well, and both in their highest Degree; as all the Waters of his Sufferings did not quench his Love, nor left He it behind Him buried in the Grave, but it arose with Him being stronger than Death; so He let it not fall to the Earth when He ascended on high, but it ascended with Him, and He still retains it in his Glory. And that our Flesh which He took on Earth, He took up into Heaven, as a Token of indissoluble Love, betwixt Him and those whom He redeemed, and sends down from thence as the rich Token of his Love, his Spirit into their Hearts; so that these are mutual Remembrances. Can He forget his own on Earth, having their Flesh so closely united to Him? You see He does not, He feels what they suffer, *Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou Me?* And can they forget Him whose Spirit dwells in them, and records lively to their Hearts the Passages of his Love, and brings all those Things  
to

to their Remembrance (as Himself tells us) that Spirit would do, and so indeed proves the Comforter by representing unto us that his Love, the Spring of our Comforts? And when we send up our Requests we know of a Friend before us there, a most true and a most faithful Friend that fails not to speak for us, what we say and much more; *He liveth*, says the Apostle, *to make Intercession for us*. This is the Ground of a Christian's Boldness at the Throne of Grace, yea therefore is the Father's Throne the Throne of Grace to us, because the Throne of our Mediator *Jesus Christ* is beside it; He sits at his Right Hand, otherwise it could be nothing to us but a Throne of Justice, and so in regard of our Guiltiness, a Throne of Terror and Affrightment, which we would rather fly from than draw near unto.

LASTLY, as we have the Comfort of such a Friend, to prepare Access to our Prayers there, that are the Messengers of our Souls; so our Souls themselves when they remove from these Houses of Clay, shall find Admission there through Him. And this He tells his Disciples again and again, and in them all his own, in his ascending to his Glory, *I go to prepare a Place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also*.

It will not be hard to persuade them that believe these Things, and are Portioners in them, to set their Hearts on them, and for that End to take them off from all other Things as unworthy of them, yea it will be impossible for them to live without the frequent and sweet Thoughts of that Place where their LORD JESUS is. Yet it is often needful to remember them, that this cannot be enough done, and by representing these Things to them, to draw them more upwards; and it is



best done in the Apostle's Words, *If ye be risen with Christ, mind those Things that are above.* If ye be risen with Him, follow Him on; let your Hearts be were He is, they that are one with Him, the blessed Seed of the Woman, find the Unity drawing them Heaven-wards; but alas! the most of us are more like the accursed Seed of the Serpent, basely grovling on this Earth, and licking the Dust; the Conversation of the Believer is in Heaven, where He hath a Saviour, and from whence He looks for Him. Truly there is little of a true Christian here, (and that argues that there is little of the Truth of Christianity among us, who are altogether here) his Head in Heaven, and his Heart there, and these are the two Principles of Life. Let us then suit the Apostle's Advice, and so enjoy the Comfort He subjoins, that by our Affections above, we may know, *That our Life is hid with Christ in GOD, and therefore that when He, who is our Life, shall appear, we likewise shall appear with Him in Glory.*

[*From thence He shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead.*]

WE have in this to consider. 1. That there is an universal Judgment. 2. That *Christ* is the Judge. 3. The Quality of the Judgment.

1. THAT there is a Judgment to come, is the frequent Doctrine of the Scriptures, and hath been ever the Belief of the Godly from the Beginning, as we may perceive by that ancient Prophecy of *Enoch*, recorded by *St. Jude*. And there is so much just Reason for it, that natural Men, by the few Sparkles of Light in their Consciences, have had some dark Notions of it, as is evident in *Plato* and the

the *Platonicks*, and not only the Philosophers but the Poets; it may be too, that they have been help'd by some scattered Glimmerings of Light concerning this, borrowed from the *Jews*, and traditionally past from Hand to Hand among the Heathens, and therefore disguised and altered after their Fashion.

IF we be persuaded that there is a Supreme Ruler of the World, who is most Wise, and Just, and Good, this will persuade us not only that there is some other State, than that we see here, appointed for Man, the most excellent Part of this visible World; but that there shall be a solemn judicial Proceeding, in entering him in that after Being. The many Miseries of this present Life, and that the best of Men are usually deepest Sharers in them, though it hath a little staggered, not only wise Heathens, but sometimes some of the prime Saints of GOD, yet it hath never prevail'd with any but brutal and debauch'd Spirits, to conclude against Divine Providence, but rather to resolve upon this, that of Necessity there must be another Kind of Issue, reducing all the present Confusions into Order. It is true, that sometimes here the LORD's Right-Hand, finds out his Enemies, and is known by the Judgment which He executes on them; and on the other Side, gives some Instances of his gracious Providence to his Church, and to particular good Men, even before the Sons of Men: But these are but some few Preludes and Pledges of that great Judgment. Some He gives, that we forget not his Justice and Goodness; but much is reserved, that we expect not all, nor the most, here, but hereafter. And it is certainly most congruous that this be done, not only in each Particular apart, but most conspicuously in all together, that the Justice and Mercy of GOD, may not only be accom-

accomplish'd, but acknowledged and magnified, and that not only severally in the several Persons of Men and Angels, but universally, jointly, and manifestly in the View of all as upon one Theatre, Angels and Men being at once, some of them the Objects of that Justice, others of Mercy, but all of them Spectators of both. Each ungodly Man shall not only read, whether he will or no, the Justice of GOD in his own Condemnation; but they shall then see the same Justice in all the rest of the condemn'd World, and the rest in them: And to the great Increase of their anguish, they shall see likewise the Glory of that Mercy, that shall then shine so bright in all the Elect of GOD, from which they themselves, are justly shut out, and deliver'd up to eternal Misery.

AND on the other Side, the Good shall with unspeakable Joy behold not only a Part as before, but the whole Sphere both of the Justice and Mercy of their GOD, and shall with one Voice admire and applaud Him in both. Besides, the Process of many Mens Actions cannot be full at the End of their Life, as it shall be at that Day; many have very large after-Reckonings to come upon them for those Sins of others to which they are accessary, though committed after their Death, as the Sins of ill educated Children to be laid to the Charge of their Parents, the Sins of such as any have corrupted, either by their Counsels, or Opinions, or evil Examples.

2. HE, the LORD JESUS shall be Judge in that great Day, the Father, and Spirit, and his Authority are all one, for they are all one GOD and one Judge; but it shall be particularly exercis'd and pronounc'd by our Saviour GOD-Man, *Jesus Chr st.* That *Eternal Word by whom all Things were*



were made, by Him all shall be judged, and so He shall be the Word in that last Act of Time, as in the first; He shall judicially pronounce that great and final Sentence, that shall stand unalterable in Eternity: And not only as the eternal Son of God, but withal the Son of Man, and so fit as King, and invested with all Power in Heaven and Earth. By that Man whom He hath appointed to judge the Quick and the Dead, Acts xvii. 31. The Powers of the World and of Hell are combin'd against his Throne, therefore they shall be his Footstool sitting on that Throne, and the Crown which He hath purchased for Believers, He shall set on their Heads with his own Hand. This shall be exceeding Joy and Comfort to all that have believed on Him, that their Redeemer shall be their Judge. He that was judged for them, shall judge them and pass Sentence according to that Covenant of Grace, pronouncing them free from the Wrath which he Himself endured for them, and Heirs of that Life that He bought with his dearest Blood.

AND that gives no less Accession to the Misery of the Wicked, that that same JESUS whom they oppos'd and despis'd, so many of them as heard any Thing of Him, shall sit upon their final Judgment, and pronounce Sentence against them, not partially avenging his own Quarrel on them, but justly returning them the Reward of their Ungodliness and Unbelief; that great Shepherd shall thus make that great Separation of his Sheep from the Goats.

3. OF the Manner we have thus much here; that He shall come from Heaven, as the Scriptures teach us, He shall visibly appear in the Air, He shall come in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory attended with innumerable Companies

panies of glorious Angels that shall serve Him, both in congregating his Elect, and segregating them from the Reprobate; but Himself in the Brightness of his own Majesty, infinitely surpassing them all. His first Coming was mean and obscure, suiting his Errand; for then He came to be judged; but that last Coming shall be glorious, for He comes to judge, and his Judgment shall be in Righteousness. There shall be no mis-allegding, or mis-proving, or mis-judging there; all the Judgments of Men, whether private or judicial, shall be rejudged there according to Truth, by a Judge before whom all Things are naked; and not only shall He know and judged all aright, but all they that are judged, shall themselves be convinced that it is so; then all will see that none are condemn'd but most deservedly, and that the LORD's Justice is pure and spotless in them that perish; as his Grace, without Prejudice to his Justice, it being satisfied in *Christ* for them that are sav'd. The Books shall be opened, those that Men so willingly, the most of them, keep shut and clasp'd up, and are so unwilling to look into, their own accusing Consciences: The LORD will proceed formally against the Wicked according to the Books; no Wrong shall be done them, they shall have fair Justice, and they shall see what they would not look upon before; when by seeing, that might have been blotted out, and a free Acquittance written in its Stead.

WE are gaping still after new Notions, but a few Things wisely and practically known. drawn down from the Head to the Heart, are better than all that Variety of knowing that Men are so taken up with; *Paucis literis opus est ad mentem bonam.* This and such like common Truths we think we both know and believe well enough; but truly if  
this

this great Point, touching the great and last Judgment, were indeed known and believed by us, it would draw our Minds to more frequent and more deep Thoughts of it; and were we often and serious in those Thoughts, they would have such Influence into all other Thoughts, and the whole Course of our Lives, as would much alter the Frame of them from what they are.

DID we think of this Gospel which we preach and hear that we must then be judged by it, we should be now more ruled by it; but the Truth is, we are willingly forgetful of these Things, they are melancholy pensive Thoughts, and we are content that the Noise of Affairs or any Vanities fill the Ear of our Minds, that we hear them not. If we be forced at some Times to hear of this last Judgment, it possibly casts our Conscience into some little trembling Fit for the Time, as it did *Felix*; but he was not, nor are we so happy, as to be shaken out of the Custom and Love of Sin by it: We promise it fair, as he did, some other Time; but if that Time never come, this Day will come, and they that shun to hear or think of it, shall then see it, and the Sight of it will be as terrible and amazing, as the timely Thoughts of it would have been profitable. It is no Doubt an unpleasing Subject to all earthly Minds, but sure it were our Wisdom to be of that Mind now that then we shall be forced to be of; we shall then read by the Light of that Fire that shall burn the World, the Vanity of all those Things whereon we now doat so foolishly. Let us therefore be persuaded to think so now, and disengage our Hearts, and fix them on Him who shall then judge us. They are only happy that trust in Him; that which is the Affrightment of others, is their great Joy and Desire; they love and long for that Day,  
both



both for their Saviour's Glory in it, and their own full Happiness, and their Love to his Appearing, is a certain Pledge of the Crown they are to receive at his Appearing. 2 *Tim.* iv. 8. *In that Day*, says the Apostle; this Day he esteems more than all his Days, therefore he names it no otherwise than *that Day*: How may we know what Day it was he meant? His Coronation-Day. But of all Men, sure the Hypocrite likes least the Remembrance of that Day; there is no Room for Disguises there, all Masks must off, and all Things appear just as they are, and that is the worst News to him that can be.

[*I believe in the Holy Ghost,*]

THIS Name, personally taken, is peculiarly that of the third Person, proceeding from the Father and the Son, by a Way that can neither be expressed nor conceived; Holy in Himself, and the Author and Cause of all Holiness in us,

IT is neither useful nor safe for us to entangle our Thoughts in Disputes concerning this Mystery, but it is necessary that we know, and acknowledge, and believe in this *holy Spirit*; it is He in whom and by whom we believe: We cannot know GOD, nor the Things of GOD, but by the Spirit of GOD; nor say that *Jesus* is GOD, but by the same Spirit. We know that this Holy Trinity co-operates in the Work of our Salvation; the Father hath given us his Son, and the Son hath sent us his Spirit, and the Spirit gives us Faith, which unites us to the Son, and through Him to the Father: The Father ordained our Redemption, the Son wrought it, the Holy Spirit reveals and applies it.

THE remaining Articles have the Fruit of that great Work, the sending of the Son of GOD in the Flesh. What it is, and to whom it belongs; the Result of *Christ's* Incarnation and Death. Yea, the great Design of GOD in the other great Work, that of the first Creation, was this second; He made the World, that out of it He might make his Church: The Holy Spirit moving upon the Souls of Men in their Conversion, aims at this same End, the gathering and compleating of his Church: He is the Breath of Life that breathed on these new Creatures that make up this Society. So then, this is as much as to say, I verily believe that GOD had such a Purpose in making the World, and in sending his Son into it, and they both in sending the Spirit, and the Spirit in his Working to make a holy Church, a Number that should serve GOD here, and enjoy him in Eternity; and I believe that GOD cannot fall short of his End, I believe therefore there is such a Company, there is a holy universal Church, (universal) diffused through the several Ages, and Places, and Nations of the World; (holy) washed in the Blood of *Christ*, and sanctified by his Spirit; that is, that it hath in all Ages continued from the Beginning, and shall continue to the End of the World, increasing still and growing to its appointed Perfection, amidst all the Enmities and Oppositions that it encounters. *I send you forth, says Christ, as Sheep among Wolves.* The Preservation of the Church is a continuing Miracle, it resembles *Daniel's* Safety among the hungry Lions, but prolong'd from one Age to another. The Ship wherein *Christ* is may be Weather-beaten, but it shall not perish. So then, you see that this Confession is no other but your Acknowledgment of GOD in Himself, Three in One, and One in Three, and his Works of the Creation of the World, and Re-

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demption of Man by his Son, made Man for that Purpose, and appropriate to them for whom it was designed by his Holy Spirit; and with this Acknowledgment our Reliance on this GOD as the Author of our Being and Well-being.

[ *The Communion of Saints.* ]

THIS springs immediately from the former; if they make one Church, then they have a very near Communion together, they are one Body united to that glorious Head that is above, they have all one spiritual Life flowing from Him: And this Communion holds not only on Earth and in Heaven apart, but even betwixt Heaven and Earth; the Saints on Earth make up the same Body with those already in Glory, they are born to the same Inheritance by new Birth, though the others are in Possession before them. This their common Title to spiritual Blessings, and eternal Blessedness, prejudices none of them; their Inheritance is such as is not lessened by the Multitude of Heirs, it is entire to each one, and that Grace and Salvation that flows from Christ, *the Son of Righteousness*, is as the Light of the Sun where it shines, none hath the less because of others partaking of it. The Happiness of the Saints is called *an Inheritance in Light*, which all may enjoy without Abatement to any: They have each their Crown, they need not, they do not envy one another, nor Ottoman-like, one Brother kill another to reign alone: Yea, they rejoice in the Happiness and Salvation of one another, they are glad at the Graces that GOD bestows on their Brethren, for they know that they all belong to the same first Owner, and return to his Glory; and that whatsoever Diversi-



ty is in them, they all agree and concenter in that Service and Good of the Church, and so what each one hath of Gifts and Graces belongs to all by Virtue of this Communion. Thus ought each of them to think, and every one of them humbly and charitably to use what he hath himself, and to rejoice in that which others have.

[*I believe a holy Catholick Church, and the Communion of Saints.*]

WE may see the Worth and the Necessity of Holiness, how much is is regarded in the whole Work; *for this very Thing did Christ give Himself for his Church, that He might sanctify it.* See the End of our Redemption. If we look as far forward as Salvation, Heaven, *nothing unclean shall enter that holy City.* And look again as far back as our Election, and these that are not Partakers of this, do but delude themselves in dreaming of Interest in the rest; no Washing in the Blood of *Christ* to Remission, but withal by the Spirit to Sanctification; no Comfort to the Unholy in their Resurrection, because no Hope of eternal Life: No, *without shall be Dogs.* In the base and foolish Opinion of the World, Holiness is a Reproach, or at the best but a poor Commendation; and Men are more pleased with any other Title; they had a great deal rather be called Learned, or Wise, or Stout, or Comely, than Holy; but GOD esteems otherwise of it, whose Esteem is the true Rule of Worth: That forecited Place, *a glorious Church,* how? Holy and without Blemish; that is indeed the true Beauty of the Soul, makes it like GOD, and that is its Comeliness. We see the LORD Himself delights to be known much by this Stile.

and glorified by it, *Holy, Holy, Holy*, so *Exod. xv. Glorious in Holiness*; and the Spirit of God is still called the *Holy Spirit*. How much then are they mistaken concerning Heaven, that think to find the Way to it out of the Path of Holiness, which is indeed the only Way that leads unto it. And yet if we reprove you of Unholiness, you say you are not Saints. No? So much the worse, for they that mean to share in eternal Life, must be such; if you be content still not to be Saints, go on, but know, that they that are not Saints in Grace here, shall never be Saints in Glory hereafter.

[ *Forgiveness of Sins.* ]

NOTWITHSTANDING Forgiveness of Sins, there is a Necessity of Holiness, though not as meriting it, as leading unto Happiness. But on the other Side, notwithstanding the highest Point of Holiness we can attain, there is a Necessity of this Forgiveness of Sins. Though Believers make up a holy Church and Company of Saints, yet there is a Debt upon them that their Holiness pays not; yea, they are so far from having a Superplus for a standing Treasure after all paid, that all the Holiness of the Saints together, will not pay the least Farthing of that Debt they owe. *As for me I will walk in mine Integrity*, says *David, Ps. xxvi. 11.* How then adds he, this shall justify me sufficiently; no, but *redeem Thou me, and be merciful to me*; and so throughout the Scriptures. All the Integrity of the Godly under the Law, did not exempt them from offering Sacrifice which was the Expiation of Sin in the Figure, looking forward to that great and spotless Sacrifice, that was to be slain for the Sins of the World; and those that believe the Gospel,

Gospel, the Application of that justifying Blood that streams forth in the Doctrine of the Gospel, is not only needful to wash in for their Cleansing in their first Conversion, but to be re-applied to the Soul, for taking off the daily contracted Guiltiness of new Sins. It is a Fountain opened and standing open for Sin and for Uncleaness, as the Sea of Brals before the Sanctuary.

THE Consideration of that precious Blood shed for our Sins, is the strongest Persuasive to Holiness, and to the avoiding and hating of Sin; so far is the Doctrine of Justification (right understood) from animating Men to Sin. But there is a continual Necessity of new Recourse to this great Expiation.

You think it an easy Matter, and a Thing that for your own Ease you willingly believe, the Forgiveness of Sins; it is easy indeed after our Fashion, easy to imagine that we believe such a Thing when we hear it, because we let it pass and question it not, we think it may be true, and think no farther on it, while we neither know truly what Sin is, nor feel the Weight of our own Sins; but where a Soul is convinced of the Nature of Sin, and its own Guiltiness, there to believe Forgiveness, is not so easy a Task.

IN believing this Forgiveness of Sins, and so the other Privileges that attend it, there are these three Things gradually leading one to the other. 1. To believe that there is such a Thing, and that it is purchased by the Death of *Christ*, and so attainable by coming unto Him for it. 2. By this the Soul finding itself ready to sink under the Burden of its own Sins, is persuaded to go to Him, and lay that Load on Him, and itself withal re-



solves to rest on Him for this Forgiveness; to believe in Him *who is the LORD our Righteousness*. 3. Upon this believing on Him for Forgiveness, follows a reflex Believing of that Forgiveness; an express Testimony of GOD's own Spirit. To believe and to grow stronger in Believing, and to aspire to the full Assurance of Faith is our constant Duty: And the keeping our Consciences pure, as much as may be, doth not only keep the comfortable Evidence of Pardon clearest and least interrupted within us, but is the likeliest to receive those pure Joys, that flow immediately into the Soul from the Spirit of GOD. The Testimony of our Conscience is (if we damp it not ourselves) our continual Feast; but that Testimony of the Spirit, is a super-added Taste of higher Comfort out of GOD's own Hand, as it were a Piece of Heaven in the Soul, which He cheers it withal.

*[The Resurrection of the Body.]*

THE Comfort of these Privileges, is opposed to those grand Evils that we feel or fear; Sanctification to the Power of Sin, Justification or Forgiveness to the Guilt of Sin, the Resurrection to temporal Death, and Life eternal to the second or eternal Death.

THIS is the raising of the self-same Body that is laid in the Dust, otherwise, the giving a Body to the Soul again, must have some other Name, for Resurrection it cannot be called.

THAT GOD can do this, notwithstanding all imaginable Difficulties in it, have we not Proof enough

enough in what He hath done ; sure that which He did in the Beginning of Time, the framing the whole World of Nothing, is more than a sufficient Pledge of this that is to be done in the End of Time.

THAT He will do it, we have his own Word for it, and the Pledge of it in raising his Son *Jesus*, therefore called *The first begotten from the Dead* ; as relating to Believers who are one with Him. The Resurrection of the Dead in general is an Act of Power, but to the Godly an Act of Grace, to the Wicked of Justice ; both shall rise by the Power of *Christ*, but to the one as a Judge, and a Judge that shall condemn them ; to the other as their Head, and their Saviour. *Joseph's* two Fellow-Prisoners were both taken out of the Prison, and at the same Time, but the one to the Court, the other to the Gallows ; so in the Resurrection.

THE Confession of Faith being of such Things as belong to Believers, and are their Happiness, therefore their Resurrection is particularly here intended, as we see eternal Life is subjoined to it.

OUR Bodies are raised that were Companions and Partakers of our Good and Evil in our Abode upon Earth, that they may in Eternity be Companions and Partakers of our Reward : Those of the Ungodly to suit their condemn'd Souls, shall be fill'd with Shame, and Vileness, and Misery ; and those that were in their lowest Estate here Temples of the Holy Ghost, shall be fill'd with that Fulness of Joy, that shall run over from the Soul unto them ; they shall be conform'd to the happy and glorious Souls to which they shall be united, yea to the glorious Body of our LORD *Jesus Christ*. There shall

shall then be nothing but Beauty, and Glory, and Immortality, in them that are now frail and mortal, and being dead, do putrify and turn to Dust. *He shall change our vile Bodies, and make them like unto his glorious Body.* But as St. Bernard says well, "If we would be sure of this, that our Bodies shall be conform'd to His, in the Glory to come, see our Souls be here conform'd to His, in that Humility which He so much manifested whilst He dwelt among Men." If we would that then our vile Body be made like his glorious Body, let our proud Heart now be made like his humble Heart.

[*Life eternal.*]

OUR Confession of Faith ends in that which is the End of our Faith, our everlasting Salvation, or, eternal Life; of which, all that we can say is but flammering, and all our Knowledge of it but Ignorance, in regard of what it is; yet so much we know, or may know of it, as, if we knew aright, would certainly draw us more into the Desires and Pursuit of it. The very Name of Life is sweet, but then especially as it is here meant, in the purest and sweetest Sense, for a truly happy Life. For a Life, full of Misery is scarce worth the Name of Life, and the longer it were, the worse; therefore the miserable Estate of damned Souls, though immortal, is called Death. So then by this Life, true and full Blessedness being meant, and then that added, that it is eternal, what can be imagined more to make it desirable?

So happy, that there shall not be the smallest Drop of any Evil and Bitterness in it, pure unmix'd Bliss, nothing present in it that is displeasing, nothing



thing wanting that is delightful; and everlasting, that when Millions of Years (if there were any such Reckoning there) are roll'd about, it shall be as far from ending as at the first.

A VERY little Knowledge of this blessed Life, would make us clean out of Love with the Life that now we make such Account of: What can it be that ties us here? The known Shortness of this Life, were it more happy than it is to any, might make it of less Esteem with us; but then withal, being so full of Miseries and Sins, so stuffed with Sorrows round about us, and within ourselves; that if the longest of it can be called long, it is only the Multitude of Miseries in it, can challenge that Name for it. Such a World of bodily Diseases. Here is one's Head paining him, another his Stomach, some complaining of this Part, some of that, and the same Party sometimes of one Malady, sometimes of another. What Disappointments and Disgraces, and cross Encounters of Affairs; what personal and what publick Calamities, and then Sin the worst of all; and yet all cannot wear us. We cannot endure to hear or think of removing; and the true Reason is, Unbelief of this eternal Life, and the Neglect of those Ways that lead to it. Be persuaded at length to call in your Heart from the foolish Chase of Vanity, and consider this glorious Life that is set before you. Do you think the Provision you make for this wretched Life worth so many Hours daily Pains, and give eternal Life scarce half a Thought in many Hours, possibly not a fixed serious Thought in many Days? Sure if you believe there is such a Thing, you cannot but be convinced, that it is a most preposterous Course you take, in the Expence of your Time and Pains upon any Thing else than on Life eternal. Think  
what

what a sad Thing it will be, when your Soul must remove out of that little Cottage wherein it now dwells, not to be bettered by the Removal, but thrust out into utter Darkneſs; whereas, if ye would give up Sin, and embrace *Jeſus Chriſt* as your Joy and your Life, in Him you would be put into a ſure Right to this eternal Life; it is a pure Life, and Purity of Life here, is the only Way to it. *Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God.*

*The End of the Thirty-Fourth VOLUME.*

6 JY 64



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OF THE



THIRTY-FOURTH VOLUME.



EXTRACT from Dr. GOODMAN'S Winter-  
Evening CONFERENCE.

*See the Characters of the Persons, and the Argument  
of each Conference, at the Beginning of the Vol.*

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